

Connecticut Common School Journal.

VOL. IV.

HARTFORD, SEPTEMBER 1, 1842.

No. 15

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COMMON SCHOOLS, IN CONNECTICUT.

TOGETHER WITH THE FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD.

REPORT OF THE BOARD.

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COMMON SCHOOLS
RESPECTFULLY SUBMIT THE ANNUAL REPORT RE-
QUIRED OF THEM BY LAW.

First, as to their own doings.

Agreeable to a resolution of the last General Assembly, the Board caused to be printed twenty-five hundred copies of the "Act concerning Common Schools," and one copy to be forwarded to the clerk of each school society, and each school district. The remainder are deposited in the office of the Commissioner of the School Fund. The law respecting schools, instead of being scattered through thirteen different acts, with conflicting provisions on the same subject, and without any proper arrangement, is now embodied in a single act, conveniently arranged, and placed within reach of all who are entrusted with its administration.

The Secretary of the Board was instructed to prosecute the measures heretofore pursued, to ascertain the condition of the schools, disseminate, as widely as possible, a knowledge of existing defects and desirable improvements, and awaken a lively interest in parents, school officers, and teachers, on the whole subject of popular education. With the exception of a few weeks spent out of the State, and which were improved, at his own expense, in extending his knowledge of the schools and school systems of neighboring states, he has devoted his time, talents, experience and compensation, to the objects of his appointment. The nature, extent, and results of his labors are herewith transmitted.

Second, as to the condition of the Common Schools, and the means of popular education generally.

For information under this head, the Board must refer the Legislature to the following documents prepared and communicated by the Secretary.

1. The Fourth Annual Report of this officer.

This Report presents the condition of the schools, and of the public mind, in relation to them, as it was in 1838, in connection with the action of the Legislature, and the measures adopted and recommended by this Board to improve it.

2. Reports from school visitors.

During the past year no returns were required from

this class of school officers, but many of them have, of their own accord, forwarded valuable reports on the condition of the schools in their respective societies, prepared agreeable to the requirements of the law.

3. Reports on the schools of New London, Litchfield, Tolland, and portions of the adjacent counties.

These communications are made by gentlemen practically acquainted with the condition and wants of our common schools from many years experience as teachers or school visitors, who were invited and employed by Mr. Barnard, out of his own compensation, to visit schools, address the children, hold public meetings, and confer with teachers, parents, and the friends of common schools generally.

4. An account of a Female Association for the improvement of common schools, in Kensington.

This association develops a new power, a power every where diffused, and capable of universal application, for the moral and intellectual improvement of our common schools.

5. Plans and descriptions of school houses erected in 1841-42.

These school houses, like others erected within the last three years, embrace many desirable improvements.

6. Libraries, lyceums, lectures, &c.

This document shows, that the means of self and mutual instruction, through books, debates and lectures, have been greatly increased and more widely enjoyed in the cities and large villages of the state within a few years past, than at any former period.

7. Education of common school teachers.

This document explains what has been done in connection with some of our higher literary institutions to prepare young men and young ladies for the work of instruction and government in our common schools.

From these documents it is evident that public attention has been extensively called to the condition and improvement of the various means of popular education, and that an impulse of the most salutary character has been given to the public mind and public action on the subject.

Third, plans for the improvement of Common Schools, and the means of popular education generally.

Under this head the Legislature are respectfully referred to the following documents prepared by the Secretary of the Board.

1. Schoolhouse architecture.

In this report the Secretary has embodied the results of his observations and reflections on the location and structure of a class of buildings which have been too much overlooked as connected with the health, comfort, and successful labor of pupils and teachers. The first part presents the leading principles of schoolhouse architecture; and the second, plans and descriptions of such as have been erected in this and other states, in large and small, city and country districts, and for schools conducted on different systems of instruction. This document should be sent to every school district in the State. From it any district can devise a plan suited to their own wants and ability.

2. Legal provision respecting the employment and education of children in factories.

In this document, a survey is taken of the history and present state of legislation in this country and in Europe, to protect factory children from excessive labor, and to secure to them the means of moral and intellectual improvement. The Board have no reason to suppose that the evils of the factory system, as developed in this document, have been felt in the manufacturing districts of this State to any great extent, still the tendencies of the system are every where the same, and should be guarded against by wise laws firmly administered. It is believed, that the provisions of our laws, framed coterminously with the establishment of large manufactories, are insufficient for the object aimed at.

3. Education and labor.

In this document is presented an abundance of evidence on the influence of such an education as our best schools impart, and such as every school in this state should give, on the quality and value of labor. It also shows the difference between the social, moral, and intellectual habits and resources of an educated laborer, and one who is not. In no other way could Connecticut so effectually develop her physical resources, and multiply the comforts of all classes of her citizens, as by improving the quality and quantity of education imparted through her common schools.

4. Common schools in cities and large villages.*

The peculiar circumstances of cities and large villages, seem to require some modification in the organization, or at least in the administration of our system of common schools as framed for the state generally. This document presents the experience of several cities and large villages where a different system has prevailed. The results are uniform, and of the most encouraging character.

5. Normal schools or seminaries for the training of teachers.*

In this paper a brief sketch of the history of this class of institutions is given, with reference to documents, where a minute account of several of the most successful in this country and Europe may be found.

6. School libraries.*

The several steps in the history and progress of this new element of popular education, is here traced. From it, it appears that in New York nearly two millions of volumes, and in Massachusetts more than three hundred thousand will, under the operation of existing laws, before the expiration of three years, be disseminated through every school district. These

school district libraries will embrace an aggregate number of volumes exceeding the number in all the public libraries of the United States.

7. Progress of common schools in the United States.

From these documents it appears that in nearly every State, efforts have been made to improve the character, and extend the usefulness, of these institutions, within the last ten years. In twelve, a department, with duties similar, in the main, to those assigned to this Board, has been organized. From the documents emanating from these departments, it would seem, that while much has been done, more, much more, remains to be accomplished; and the zeal and liberality with which the work of school improvement goes on, is a pledge that greater progress will be made. In this work, Connecticut, from her long established school system, from her munificent endowment, her compact, homogeneous, and intelligent population, should take the lead.

Among the documents communicated by the Secretary, as illustrating the condition, and containing plans and suggestions for the improvement of the schools, the Board would refer particularly to the Connecticut Common School Journal. This publication has been continued nearly to the completion of the fourth volume, and one copy, at least, sent into each school society in the State. The current year is devoted almost exclusively to methods for the use of teachers, and it is to be regretted, that a wider circulation cannot be secured, by either state or individual aid.

Fourth, the expenditures authorized or incurred by the Board.

1. An order was drawn on the Comptroller in favor of J. Holbrook, for fifty-six dollars, for printing an edition of twenty-five hundred copies of the "Act concerning Common Schools," agreeable to a resolution of the last General Assembly.

2. The Secretary of the Board has been allowed \$828, or three dollars a day for two hundred and seventy-six days' service, agreeable to the act of 1841. This does not include the time spent out of the State, although a portion of it was devoted to inquiries into the schools and school systems of other states—the results of which will accompany his Report.

3. The expenses incident to the discharge of the duties of the office, have also been allowed, after his account had been properly audited—viz.

Travelling expenses, \$240.67. Postage, \$41.95. Stationery, circulars, \$11.17.

It is due to Mr. Barnard, to say, that in addition to the sums thus reimbursed, he has incurred expenses in various useful forms for the schools, to more than the whole amount of his salary.

The whole expense of this department, for which the Board are in any way responsible, is \$1121.79.

As some misunderstanding prevails on this subject, by which great injustice has been done to Mr. Barnard, as well as to the Board, it may be proper to state, that—

No member of the Board, as such, has received anything, either as compensation for services rendered, or for expenses incurred in attending the regular meetings of the Board, or in promoting, by correspondence or otherwise, the objects of their appointment.

The Secretary of the Board has been paid for his services the sum authorized by law, and on the same

* These documents were not ordered to be printed by the Legislature. No. 4 has since been printed in the New York District School Journal.

principle, that members of the Legislature, and every per diem officer in the employ of the state or national government is paid. He has not asked, or received, compensation for time spent out of the State on his own business, or for purposes of health or recreation. The whole amount allowed him, in the way of compensation, for nearly four years' devotion to the interest of the common schools of the State, is \$3747, or \$937 a year; and this sum, and more, he has expended back again in promoting what he supposed to be, the prosperity and usefulness of these schools.

The aggregate expense authorized or incurred by the Board, since its organization to this time, including both the compensation and expenses of the Secretary, is \$5816.31, or \$1473 a year; and for every dollar thus drawn from the treasury, an equal amount has been expended, by voluntary contribution, to promote the general object.

The expenses of the Board have been paid, not out of the School Fund, but out of the general funds of the treasury.

In concluding this Report, which will terminate the connexion of some of the undersigned, with the Board, we cannot refrain from expressing our conviction of the beneficial results of the measures of the Legislature, in the cause of general education. We can truly bear testimony to the indefatigable exertions and ability of the Secretary of the Board, which he has exhibited from the beginning, in promoting the objects of his appointment, and carrying forward his noble and well directed efforts for the lasting benefit of our youth. His labors will long be felt in our schools, and be highly appreciated by all who entertain just and liberal views on education; and whether appreciated or not, he will assuredly have the satisfaction of having generously, with little or no pecuniary compensation, contributed four of the prime years of his life to the advancement of a cause well worthy of the persevering efforts of the greatest and best of men.

WM. W. ELLSWORTH,
SETH P. BEERS,
F. A. PERKINS,
ANDREW T. JUDSON,
SAMUEL CHURCH,
SAMUEL D. HUBBARD,
LORIN P. WALDO
CHARLES ROBINSON,

NEW HAVEN, May 4, 1842.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY.

TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COMMON SCHOOLS.

Gentlemen:

At your invitation, in June last, I resumed the duties and labors of Secretary of this Board, with an expectation that another appointment would be made in the course of a few weeks. As no appointment was made, I have continued to prosecute substantially the same measures which have heretofore received your sanction and approbation. I have sought diligently, by my own efforts, and the co-operation of others, to ascertain the condition of the common schools, to collect, devise, and disseminate plans and suggestions for their improvement, and to awaken in parents, teachers, committees, and the public generally, an interest in their increasing prosperity. The Board are respectfully

referred to the accompanying documents for more detailed information as to the nature and results of my labors and inquiries during the past year. In this communication I propose to review, as briefly as I can, the state of the common schools, and of the public mind, and the school law respecting them, in some important particulars, in connection with the measures which have been adopted by the Legislature and this Board in their behalf, since 1838.

Prior to 1838, there was no official information respecting the condition of the common schools, for whose support the avails of more than two millions of permanent funds were appropriated. There was less accountability required of those intrusted with the administration of the system, and the expenditure of this large amount of money, than in any other department of the public service. There was no department or officer of the government charged with the special supervision of this great interest; and the statute book, for nearly a half century, bore few traces of any efficient legislation to secure the progress of the system, or promote the usefulness of the schools.

The facts collected under a resolution of the General Assembly of 1837, and, at the expense, and by the exertions of individuals, in the winter and spring of 1838, induced the Legislature of that year, with great unanimity, "to provide for the better supervision of the common schools," by bringing their condition, at all times, before parents, and local school officers in the register to be kept by the teacher, and, annually, before the school societies, in the reports of school visitors, and before the Legislature and the State, in the report of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools. While this Act leaves every member of the community in his unabridged rights, as regards the education of his own children, and, school societies and districts to maintain and manage the schools, to correct abuses, and carry out desirable reforms, according to their own judgment, it aims to secure the more particular attention of local committees to their supervision, and to enlist the counsel and experience of a Board, and the entire time, strength and talents of one person, to collect and disseminate information, to discover, devise and recommend plans of improvement, and to awaken, enlighten and elevate public sentiment, in relation to the whole subject of popular education.

Such was the general nature and scope of the legislation of 1838. The great leading object had in view, was, to collect and disseminate information as to existing defects and desirable improvements, in every practicable way, as the only basis of sound legislative, local or individual action on the subject. To what extent, in what manner, and with what results this object has been prosecuted, I will proceed to show.

I. Prior to 1838, there was a great want of information as to the practical working of our school system, and the means of popular education generally in the State.

To supply this information, an enquiry was commenced, and has been continued for nearly four years, covering the following particulars, as to:

SCHOOL SOCIETY OR TOWN. Territorial extent—occupation, agricultural, manufacturing, &c.—population by last census—amount of grand list—amount and rate of tax on property for school purposes—amount received from state school funds; do. from town deposit fund; do. from local school fund—number of common schools, and number of children attending the same in summer; do. in winter—public high school, if any, how supported—number of private schools, and aggregate number of scholars—lyceums, lectures, libraries, &c.—annual school society meeting, number of voters present, and doings of—public meetings for school purposes, attendance at, and interest in—meetings of all the schools, how often, and how managed.

SCHOOL OFFICERS. *School Visitors.* How many appointed—number of meetings during the year—regulations, if any, respecting books, studies, &c.—mode of examining teachers, and giving certificates, whether by the whole board, or sub-committee, at one or different times, strict or otherwise—mode of visiting schools, by sub-committee to visit all the schools, or by committee to one or more schools, or by the whole board—compensation, for how many days, how much a day, and whole amount—copy of report to school society, and returns to the State Board—other doings of—record of proceedings.

School Society Committee. Action, if any, on enumeration returns of district committees—evidence required by, on which certificate that the schools have been kept in all respects according to law, is given—record of proceedings.

District Committee. How appointed—mode of construing the words "residing and belonging," in making the enumeration in August—inquiries made in employing teachers—course pursued in regard to repairs, fuel, application of school money, visiting schools, &c.

DISTRICT. Territorial extent, city or country, occupation—population—interest of parents in schools, number who attended annual meeting; do. visited school—number of persons over 4 and under 16 "residing in and belonging to"—number in common school: do. in private school; do. in no school—length of district school in summer; do. in winter—vacations—amount received from tax on grand list; do. from school fund; do. from town deposit fund; do. from local school fund; do. from quarter bills—amount of quarter bills abated, and how paid.

Schoolhouse. Location, retired, pleasant, healthy or otherwise—material, age, and state of repair—size—means of procuring pure water—situation and condition of woodshed and other out buildings—yard and play ground—entry, one or more, scraper, mat, hooks or shelves for hats, pail, cup, wash basin, towel, &c.

Schoolroom and furniture. One or more; height, length, breadth of each—condition as to cleanliness and means of securing the same—windows, number, height from floor, curtains, blinds, &c.—ventilation, by lowering upper sash; opening into the attic, or by a flue—mode of warming—thermometer—fuel, kind, quality, quantity and how

furnished—seats, height from floor, adapted to children of different ages, provided with backs or otherwise—desks, height from floor and from seat, shelf, place for slate, ink stand, arrangement of in reference to teacher—accommodations for small children—platform and desk for teacher—place for recitation—apparatus, such as black board, maps, globes, clock—school library, origin of, and number of books.

Teachers. Number, name and age—previous education—experience as a teacher in the same school; in any school—follow teaching as profession, or temporary resource—date of certificate—character of examination—wages per month, with or without board—fixed or transient place of boarding and price of board—success of instruction and government as to older children and higher studies; do. as to younger children and primary studies—motives appealed to—kinds of punishment—books on the theory and practice of teaching, what and how many owned or read—association among each other for mutual improvement and visits to each other's school—difficulties in the school, or with parents, how caused.

Attendance. Register supplied or not, how kept—whole number registered; do. of boys; do. of girls; number of each under 4, and under 10; over 10, and over 16; no. who have attended school during the year; for six months; for four months; average daily attendance—means resorted to for securing regular and punctual attendance.

Studies. Number of different studies, and name of each study—number of different classes in each study—number of persons in each class—length of time given to each class—studies favored in the school; do. discouraged or neglected.

Books. Books, name and number of each in the several studies—recommended or prescribed by school visitors, or not—number of children not supplied—expense of new books, and evils from diversity or want of.

Recitations, Methods, &c. Order and number of different recitations; do. in morning; do. in afternoon—extent and subjects of oral instruction; do. of monitorial; do. of simultaneous; do. of interrogative; do. in which slate and black board are used—modes of interesting and employing the youngest children; length and frequency of the recess for—time devoted to study—alternation of studies among the older scholars—frequency and mode of conducting reviews—use of question books, keys, &c.

The alphabet and spelling, how commenced, before or after words—taught from spelling book, or reading lessons, or from both; by writing words and sentences from dictation on the slate or black board; by constant drilling on the difficult words, &c.

Reading, mode of teaching, including pronunciation, definition, derivation, and paraphrasing—the extent to which the interrogative and explanatory method is pursued—how far the teacher illustrates, by his own reading, the best method—in connection with history, geography, biography, &c.

Writing, at what age commenced; with slate or

paper; in classes, or the whole school at once; in morning or afternoon; any regular system of books—pen, ink, and ink stand, how supplied—instructions in pen making.

Arithmetic—elementary ideas of number, how given; use of blocks, numeral frame, slate and black board—mental arithmetic—exercises apart from the text book—use of keys—arithmetical tables, how taught, and to what extent—rules, when learned.

Geography—mathematical or physical commenced first—elementary ideas of form, space, direction, and distance, how given—map making, beginning with schoolhouse yard, district, town, how far carried—outline maps, mode and extent of their use; do. globes; do. black board—principles of classification and comparison, how practised—oral instruction in.

Grammar—at what age commenced; with a text book, or orally—in connection with reading, conversation, and exercises in composition.

Composition—when commenced—framing one or more words into a sentence—writing out a story told or read by teacher—keeping a daily journal of studies, reading or doings—writing letters; knowledge of forms, modes of address, use of capitals, abbreviations, pauses, &c. &c.

History, how far pursued; vocal music do.; drawing do., especially in reference to interesting little children, and in the older classes, to the various trades of the community; book keeping; geometry do.; physiology do.

Morality—the Bible, when and how read; modes of giving instruction.

Visitation. When visited by district committee, by school visitors, by parents.

Vacations. Length of—what season of the year.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS. Name—incorporated or not—amount of permanent fund—rate of tuition—course of study—number and wages of teachers—number of scholars; do. from the district; do. from the town; do. from the State; do. from other states—apparatus—library—influence of on common schools.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES, &c. Libraries. Name, origin, number of volumes, number of persons having access, terms of membership, &c.

Lyceums. Name, origin, objects, age and qualification of membership.

Lectures. Number and subject of lectures—when delivered—free or pay courses, attendance.

Debates. Public, or confined to members, questions, &c.

Classes for Mutual Instruction. Number composing a class, subjects, mode of proceeding.

Such was the nature and extent of the information sought. The form in which the information was sought, was intended, whenever practicable, to invite attention to the defects, if any, or the remedy proposed. The mode of obtaining it, was—

1. By personal inspection and inquiry.

For this purpose, and the collateral object of disseminating information thus collected, and awakening public interest, I devoted more than two thirds of the first two years of my appointment,

and a considerable portion of the last two. During the four years, I have visited more than two thirds of all the towns and school societies of the State, have inspected more than five hundred schools while in session, have conferred with more than 1200 school teachers, and with one or more school visitors or district committee in every society or district visited, have questioned children in the school and out of it, as to the modes in which they were taught, and to ascertain the universality and practical nature of the education given in these schools, I have inquired as to the early intellectual and moral education of large numbers of persons who have become a burden and an expense to the community, by their vices, poverty, and crime.

To enable me to correct and compare the results of my own observation, I have employed, at my own expense, at different times, six persons practically acquainted with, and deeply interested in, the subject, from many years' experience as teachers or school visitors, to visit most of the towns in six, out of the eight, counties of the state. The report of one of these gentlemen, who has visited 57 towns, including 69 school societies, and addressed the children in 154 schools, and 76 public meetings of parents and friends of education, is herewith appended.

2. By official returns from school visitors.

Agreeable to the provisions of the act of 1838, blank forms for statistical returns, including the most important points of inquiry above specified, were prepared and forwarded to school visitors, in 1839 and 1840, and returns were received, in the course of the two years, from all but fifteen school societies. In 1841, information, varying in some particulars, was received from the same class of officers, in a series of connected remarks.

3. By the annual reports of school visitors to their respective societies.

More than one hundred of these documents, evincing the most minute and faithful inquiry, and containing the results of wide and long continued observation and reflection, have been forwarded to this department.

4. By replies to circulars and letters of inquiry.

More than three thousand circular letters, embracing, at different times, most of the points omitted in the returns of school visitors, have, in the course of four years, been addressed to gentlemen known to be interested in, and well acquainted with, the subjects on which information was sought. These applications have been invariably treated with respect, and, in most instances, the replies have been full, and satisfactory.

5. By statements and discussions, in county conventions, and local school meetings.

In these meetings, called by public notice, and open to free discussion, the most important features of our school system have been fully considered, and many interesting and important facts stated, on the personal knowledge of teachers and school officers.

6. By reports from voluntary associations for the improvement of common schools.

Associations of this character have been formed in all parts of the State, some of which have prove-

cuted the object had in view with zeal and perseverance, and communicated, from time to time to this department, the results of their labors.

The information, collected in these various modes, has been classified, condensed, and compared, and the results have been communicated, from time to time, to the Legislature, and to the people, through the Reports of the Board, the Connecticut Common School Journal, and addresses at public meetings.

II. In 1838, there was a great want of information respecting the schools, school systems, and progress of popular education generally, in other states and countries.

I have no reason to suppose there was as many as a dozen reports, or books relating to the school systems of other states, out of the office of the Commissioner of the School Fund, in the State. An impression prevailed, to some extent, that the Connecticut common school system, if not the only one, was certainly the best in the world, and that little or no attention had been bestowed on this great subject by the legislatures or people of other states and countries. It seemed to me desirable to correct this erroneous impression, and to show to the Legislature and people, that much had been already accomplished, and more was in progress, to devise, extend, and perfect systems of public education, on both sides of the Atlantic, and that in this field, nations were now engaged in generous rivalry with each other. Without intending any disparagement to our own school system, or wishing to hold up the schools or school systems of other countries as perfect models for our imitation or adoption, it seemed desirable to disseminate a knowledge of the nature, extent, and results of these efforts, on the broad catholic principle, 'that the true greatness of a state does not consist in borrowing nothing from others, but in borrowing from all whatever is good, and in perfecting what it appropriates.' Other states had acted on this policy. Prussia, near the beginning of the present century, sent some of her best teachers into Switzerland to study the methods of instruction pursued by Pestalozzi and other educators, and has, from time to time, engrafted upon her system, such modifications, and tried in her normal schools, such methods, as the experience of other countries had proved to be advantageous, and adapted to her circumstances. Holland, through the agency of her school inspectors, and voluntary associations, has made her teachers acquainted with the methods and practices of the best schools in other countries. France, in 1811, commissioned Baron Cuvier, and in 1830 and 1836, M. Cousin, to visit Holland, Prussia, and other German States, and inquire into the condition of the public schools. The reports of these distinguished men were widely circulated at the expense of the government, and the reports of the latter, especially, have been widely circulated in other countries. England, through her Board of Poor Law Commissioners, before organizing her schools for the training of pauper children, commissioned intelligent men to examine the best schools in Scotland, Holland, Switzerland, and other Continental States,

in order to profit by their experience. The same course has been pursued in this country. The original Free School System of New England, as established in Massachusetts, was but a modification of the parochial schools of Scotland and Germany, established mainly through the influence of Luther, Knox, and their associate reformers. The first school law of Connecticut, enacted in 1650, is almost a literal transcript of the school law of Massachusetts, passed in 1647. And the school systems of nearly all the states have been framed substantially after these two—all of them, however, embracing some modifications, better to adapt them to their peculiar circumstances, and to keep pace with the progress of society. In 1835, the legislature of New York published an outline of the Prussian school system, consisting of answers given by a gentleman then travelling in this country as commissioner from the king of Prussia, to a series of questions proposed by the Superintendent of Common Schools. This was afterwards reprinted by the legislature of Massachusetts. In 1836, Prof. Stowe was requested by the legislature of Ohio to collect, during his contemplated tour in Europe, facts and information in relation to the various systems of public instruction, and to make report thereof on his return. This report, which was confined principally to elementary public instruction in Prussia and Wirtemberg, was printed by order of the legislature, and subsequently published by the legislatures of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Massachusetts, and other states. In 1839, President Bache, after two years of personal examination, made a report on the state of education in orphan institutions, and schools of primary and secondary instruction in Europe, which constitutes an octavo volume of 666 pages. This volume is one of the most valuable contributions which has been made to the cause of education.

The information embodied in these various reports respecting public elementary education in Europe, was spread before the Legislature as an appendix to my report in 1840, and sent to every school district, together with selections from more than thirty publications besides. This document is equal to a volume of 400 pages of the same type as the statutes of the state, and is believed to be the most complete account of public elementary education embodied in a single volume.

The more recent school documents, in several of the United States, and especially in Massachusetts and New York, have been marked by great ability and research, and have thrown much light on the actual condition, and modes of improving common schools. By an interchange of documents, and personal and written communications with gentlemen connected with this department in their respective states, and some opportunities of personal inspection of the schools, I have aimed to make myself acquainted with the progress of education in the United States. Such portions of the above documents, and such facts as I have been able to collect in other ways, which seemed applicable to our own circumstances for warning, encouragement, or imitation, have been, from time to time,

communicated to the legislature, and to the public. I shall append to this report such documents and information as I have collected during the past year.

It would be strange, if an effort to disseminate a knowledge of this glorious progress of universal education in different states and countries, of this common effort of the nations to lift from human nature the burden of ignorance and error, of this glorious emulation in adding to the common stock of human knowledge, virtue and happiness, should be made a matter of reproach; and much more, if it should be so far misconstrued as to be regarded as evidence of a deliberate purpose on the part of any man, or any body of men, to impose a foreign school system upon Connecticut. Certain it is, that Connecticut, if she is true to her past history, will not long remain cold and lifeless amid this common zeal for improvement, this universal sympathy and effort to promote the dignity of man.

III. In 1838, no facilities had been offered to such persons as wished to become teachers, to prepare themselves by an appropriate course of study, and a practical acquaintance with the labors and duties of the school room, for the work.

The necessity or importance of providing such facilities in regard to the profession and art of teaching, as the common sense and universal experience of mankind had proved to be important and necessary in every other profession, and in every other art, had been but little discussed in our public journals, in legislative halls, or in public addresses. The want of information and interest on this subject it has been a leading object to provide for through the Journal, in reports to the Legislature, and in every form of reaching the public mind. As a demonstration of what might be done to improve the existing qualification of school teachers, arrangements were made in Hartford, in 1839-40, by which, in the autumn, a class of twenty-six young men, and in the spring, a class of sixteen young ladies, were enabled, without any expense to them, to review and continue their studies under the recitations and practical lectures of experienced teachers, and to witness, in the public and private schools of the city, other modes of school arrangement, instruction, and discipline, than those to which they had been accustomed. Every member of these classes was subsequently employed in the common schools, and most of them still continue in the schools.

The demand for higher qualifications on the part of school visitors, and the community generally, the advantages of specific training, as seen by candidates themselves, and the interest of the principals of many of our academies, has led to the establishment, in this class of institutions, of a course of instruction particularly adapted to such as propose to become, or improve their previous attainments, as common school teachers. An account of the course pursued at the Winsted High School, is herewith annexed.

In the Wesleyan University at Middletown, a Normal Professorship has been established. The gentleman appointed to this place, is the principal of the Public High School of Middletown, and

brings to the office a thorough education, wide and successful experience as a teacher, great capacity, industry, and an ardent zeal for the improvement of common schools. A practical knowledge of the art of teaching, the noblest, but least studied, of all arts, will be given, by the employment of the candidate teachers as assistants in the male and female departments of the High School, and in one of the primary schools. The letter of Prof. Saxe annexed, presents an outline of his plan.

Some advance has also been made towards organizing a seminary for the training of female teachers, in connection with the education and care of orphan children. This step, if it can be compassed, will be a double service to the State and the cause of education. It will provide a home, and the means of physical, intellectual and moral culture for a class of children, who most need the succoring aid of individual and public benevolence, and furnish our common schools with a class of teachers, who have been drawn to the work of preparation by a love of the employment, and the highest motive of christian benevolence. As soon as a proper degree of legislative, or individual co-operation is extended to commence this enterprise on a safe footing, the services of one of the most experienced and successful teachers in the country, can be secured gratuitously as Principal.

IV: In 1838, there were, in the State, comparatively, but few books on education, and particularly of a class calculated to interest, inform, and assist school officers, parents and teachers, in the work of improving common schools.

To remedy this defect in part, the Connecticut Common School Journal was established. By turning to the subjects treated of in the course of the four years, in the index annexed, it will be seen, that almost every topic connected with the practical working of our own school system, and the mechanical arrangements, means of instruction, classification, discipline, methods and studies, of common schools, is discussed. Copious selections from standard writers on education, and original communications from experienced and successful teachers and educators, have been published. During the past year, extracts from ten or twelve new books for the use of teachers, and an entire work on slate and black board exercises, have been published. If the methods illustrated and described in this last treatise could be tried in all the schools, it would change the entire aspect of common school education.

It has been my aim, in this publication, to embrace only documents and articles of permanent value and interest. This has necessarily interfered with its temporary popularity and general circulation, and made it the source of constant expense. It is believed, however, that no one work before the public contains more practical information as to the condition and progress of schools in different states and countries, than these volumes. The Legislature, in 1840, made a small appropriation towards the expense of sending to every school society in the State a bound copy of such numbers of the two first volumes as I had previously placed

at the disposal of the committee on schools. In some instances, these packages have not reached the clerks of the school societies. In such cases, nearly complete sets of the last two volumes will be furnished, on application to this office.

In addition to the time, labor and expense devoted to the Journal, no efforts have been spared to promote the circulation of such works as Palmer's Teacher's Manual, Abbott's Teacher, Hall's Lectures, Dunn's Schoolmaster's Manual, Davis' Teacher Taught, Dwight's Schoolmaster's Friend, Confessions of a Schoolmaster, District School as it was, Wood's Sessional School, Lessons on Objects, Hints and Methods for Teachers, Dr. Alcott's Slate and Black Board Exercises, &c. I have reason to suppose, that there are now at least two thousand volumes more of such works owned by, or accessible to, teachers and school visitors, than there were in the State in 1840. One gentleman alone has been instrumental in disposing of more than one thousand volumes, in the course of the last year.

V. Prior to 1838, no efforts had been made on the part of the Legislature or of individuals,* to prepare and make known improved plans of schoolhouse architecture.

In no department of the system was there more pressing necessity for improvement, at once thorough and general, than in this. In no other, were there to be found so few instances which could be pointed to as models for imitation. In no other, were the disastrous results of neglect so little appreciated, or the standard of practical attainment, so low. More than nine tenths of all the district schoolhouses erected prior to 1838, and which have not been since renovated, are incomplete and forlorn specimens, at best, of what such structures should be. They stand in, or directly on, the public highway, and not unfrequently in bleak, and unsheltered situations, without any playground or appropriate out buildings. They are unattractive without, and small, inconvenient, and uncomfortable within. They are imperfectly supplied with the means of ventilation, and uniform temperature. They are so lighted, that the eyesight of the scholar is not unfrequently endangered by the glare of the sun, and their attention distracted by every passing object. The seats are invariably too high, and the general arrangement and construction of the seats and desks are not calculated to promote the health, comfort, and successful labor of the pupils, or convenient supervision by the teacher. But bad as most of them were originally, they are rendered worse from the want of proper care and timely and necessary repairs. Almost every old schoolhouse which I have visited, is hacked and disfigured, and in not a few instances disgraced by improper, profane, or licentious images.

Such was the condition of many, very many, of these "moral beauties" of Connecticut—of these village nurseries of health, virtue, and intelligence. They stood, and many of them still stand, in mournful and disgraceful contrast with every other edifice

erected for public or domestic use. The hand of improvement and taste, which had reached other structures,—our colleges, academies, retreats, prisons, bridges, had not reached them.

To effect a reform in the location, construction, and furniture of the district schoolhouse, public attention was early and earnestly called to the subject. The many evil influences, direct and indirect, on the health, manners, morals, and intellectual progress of children, which grew out of their bad and defective structure, were pointed out. The improved plans which had been published by individuals, educational societies, and legislatures in other states, were procured and made known through the Journal and public addresses. New plans were devised, with the advice of experienced school teachers and architects, and furnished gratuitously to such districts as were building new, or re-modelling their old houses. Considerable effort has been made, and expense incurred, to induce at least one district in each county to erect such a building as could be pointed to as a model in the essential features of a good schoolhouse, and to supply suitable apparatus and a library for the children, teacher and parents generally.

The result is, that within the last four years, more than fifty new schoolhouses have been erected, and a greater number of old ones entirely re-modelled in their interior arrangements, on correct principles, and with the latest improvements. The advance which has been made in this department, both in public opinion and public action, is secure from accident, for it is put into brick and mortar, and other durable materials. Still, the work is but just begun, and there are many district schoolhouses old, repulsive, and uncomfortable, which should give way to new, attractive, and convenient structures. To aid in this work of reform, I have embodied, in the accompanying report, the results of my observation and reflection on the general principles of schoolhouse architecture, with such plans and descriptions of various structures recently erected or prepared, as will enable any district to frame one suitable to their own wants, free of expense.

VI. In 1838, no efforts had been made to provide the district schools with libraries, and such cheap apparatus as was considered indispensable in the best conducted private schools.

Out of 1400 schools of which information was obtained by personal inspection, or returns from school visitors, there were but six libraries, containing, in all, less than one thousand volumes, and but two globes. These were purchased by subscription, or given directly by individuals. In one section of the State, through which a lecturer on the subject of school apparatus passed some years since, a numeral frame, and geometrical and other cards, were occasionally to be met with. In the schools of this section, the black board was more frequently seen, and its many useful applications understood.

To remedy this state of things, districts were empowered to raise, by tax, a small sum annually, to be expended in the purchase of school libraries

* The premium offered by Erastus Ellsworth, Esq., of East Windsor, in 1837, for the best model of a school desk, should be excepted.

and apparatus; and the advantages of good books open to all the children and inhabitants of a school district, and of every form of visible illustration in the work of instruction, has been discussed in the *Journal*, and in public addresses. Through the same channels, directions have been given for making the more simple, but useful, forms of apparatus, such as black board, numeral frames, outline maps, and globes, and the best methods of using them. Some assistance has also been rendered to districts, in purchasing and procuring libraries and apparatus. In this way, to my personal knowledge, more than three thousand volumes have been added to district libraries, and more than one hundred different articles of apparatus been supplied within the last two years. Of the treatise on slate and black board exercises, spoken of in another place, one thousand copies, at least, will be distributed gratuitously in the State. But the work of improvement, in this respect, has but just begun, and some further legislation is necessary in order to induce every district to supply itself with a library of useful books, and with some cheap and indispensable apparatus. A small appropriation for three years, even one half of the amount provided in New York and Massachusetts, to each district, to be increased by a similar amount raised by tax or subscription, would accomplish the object.

The value of the district schools, for the coming summer and winter, with the same teachers, might be doubled, at least, if a person properly qualified could be employed to visit every town, and spend but a day with all the teachers in explaining the construction and most obvious uses of the cheapest school apparatus.

VII. In 1838, the condition of the common schools, and the means of popular education generally, in the cities and large villages of the State, was deplorable. There was not one, which had a system of common schools at all adequate to its educational wants. Not one, in which there were not many expensive private schools, patronized by nearly all the professional, educated, and wealthy families, and by many others who were desirous of procuring the best education for their children.

The attendance on the common schools was small. Out of all the children between the ages of four and sixteen in the six cities, less than one half were nominally connected with the common schools, in summer or in winter, and less than one third were in regular attendance; more than fifteen hundred were not in the private or public schools in the winter of 1839-40; and about one fourth were in private schools. For the tuition alone, of those who attended the private schools, numbering about twenty-five hundred, a sum equal to what was provided by the State for the education of forty thousand children in the district schools, was voluntarily expended.

The schoolhouses provided in the cities, could not seat, at any one time, one half of the children who were entitled to go to them; and, with a single exception, in New Haven, there was not one which could be pointed to as a model in respect to location, size, ventilation, and the construction and arrangements of seats and desks.

There was great inequality in the means of a common school education in the same city. Each city was divided up into districts, and these districts differed from each other in territorial extent, population, pecuniary ability, wages and qualifications of teachers, parental interest, and the supervision of the committees. The result was, a vast inequality in the education of children of the same city, residing in different districts.

There was a want of system in regard to the studies, books, methods of instruction, and discipline, in the schools of the same city. This subjected a class of the population, whose sole reliance is on these schools, to an unnecessary expense, whenever they changed their residence, and retarded the progress of their children, in passing into different schools.

The course of instruction in most of the city districts, was limited to the mere elementary studies; in all of them, in 1838, there were less than one hundred scholars who were attending to the higher branches of an English education.

The mode of providing for the expense of the common schools, over the receipts from the public funds, was, in most of the districts in every city, by quarter bills, or a tax on the scholars, according to the time of attendance, payable by the parent or guardian. This mode of supporting schools, threw upon those parents who sent and were barely able to pay the quarter bills of their own children, the quarter bills of those who could not, and thereby imposed on them a tax for this purpose, equal to all the other taxes of the city. Its general operation was, to lower the standard of common school education to that point, which the public money, with a small quarter bill, would maintain, to tempt parents to keep their children at home on any trifling occasion for their services, and to exempt those who are best able to bear it, the class who patronize private schools, from all expense in behalf of the education of the poor.

The interest of the community, or of parents, in the common schools, as indicated by attendance in school meetings, by expenditures for school purposes, by visits to the schools, and general co-operation with teachers and committees, was even lower than in the country districts generally.

To remedy these and other evils in the condition of the common schools in our cities, the attention of individuals, committees, and the public, has been called to them by means of the press, public addresses, and conversation, and to the following plan for their improvement, or such modification of the same as shall be better adapted to the wants of each place.

1. A union of the several districts in a city, or at least, some concert of action among them, for the purpose of bringing all the schools into one system of studies, books, classification and management, and making the school interest one of the leading interests of the whole city.

2. The establishment of schools of different grades, for children of different ages and studies.

First—Primary schools, for the young children, to be located in different parts of the city. In this

class of schools, the arrangements of the school room, play ground, studies, and exercises should be adapted to promote the health, manners, moral culture, and the gradual and harmonious development, of the mind of the very young. Oral teaching, in respect to real objects, maps and figures, habits of observation, the alphabet, easy lessons in reading, vocal music, drawing and other lessons on the slate, should constitute the course of instruction. Female teachers, in all cases, should be employed, and the supervision of the schools be mainly left with the mothers of the children.

Second—Intermediate or secondary schools. These schools should take up the education of the children where the primary schools leave it, and carry it forward to as high a point as is now attained in the first classes of the best district schools. If the foundation was properly laid in the primary school, and teachers properly qualified employed in both, it is believed that all which is now taught in our best common schools, could be accomplished at the age of twelve, and thus four years, at least, in the school period of most children, be saved. In this class of schools, there should be a male and female principal, as the influence of both are needed at this stage of the moral education, and the manners, of children.

Third—A high school with two departments, one for boys, and the other for girls. This school should receive such pupils as are found qualified in the studies of the secondary schools, on due examination, and conduct them forward in algebra, geometry, surveying, natural, moral, and mental philosophy, political economy, the history and constitution of Connecticut and the United States, book keeping, composition, and drawing, with reference to its use in various kinds of business. Whatever may be the particular studies, this school should afford a higher elementary education than is now given in the district school, and, at the same time, furnish an education preparatory to the pursuits of commerce, trade, manufactures, and the mechanical arts. All that is now done in this way for the children of the rich and the educated, should be done for the whole community; so that the poorest parent who has worthy and talented children, may see the way open for them to a thorough and practical education. In some districts or cities, the studies of this school might be included in the secondary school, in case there were not scholars enough to constitute a school by itself, and the two departments might also be united for this purpose. However constituted, whether as one department or two, as a distinct school, or as part of the secondary school, something of the kind is needed to make the pleasures and advantages of a good education common, and to draw in the children, the means, and the interest, of a large number of parents whose regards are now turned exclusively to private schools.

Fourth—As a part of the system of common schools for cities, I have urged the establishment of evening schools for such young persons as are hurried into the counting room, the store, or the work shop, without a proper elementary education, or for

another class who have had such advantages, and may wish to pursue such studies of the high school as are connected with their several trades and pursuits. By means of such schools, the defective education of many of the youth of our cities might be remedied, and their various employments be converted into the most efficient instruments of self culture.

3. Each grade of schools should be provided with suitable school rooms, play ground, and class rooms. They should also be furnished with maps, diagrams, globes, and other forms of illustration, so that the knowledge acquired may be vivid, accurate, and practical. To enable the teacher to give oral and explanatory instruction, and the scholar to carry on his investigations beyond the point where his teacher and class book may leave it, a library of well selected books should be provided.

4. The same studies, books, course of instruction, and discipline generally, should be adopted in all of the schools of the same class. To secure this uniformity, and bring the teachers and scholars under constant inspection, the management of the schools, and the property and concerns of the district should be left with a committee, or board, elected by the people, and subject to their directions. To give stability and efficiency to the measures of the board, it might be provided, that one third, at least, of their number, should have been members the year previous, and one person should be designated to devote his whole time to the prosperity of the schools.

5. To place these schools on their old footing, and interest the whole community in their welfare, I have advocated the abandonment of quarter bills, or charge per scholar, and making property, whether it represented children or not, chargeable with their support. This is the cardinal idea of the free school system, and with the aid now furnished from the school fund, which is appropriated for the equal benefit of all the people, this charge cannot be considered burdensome. This, too, is the practice of every city which has an efficient system of common schools. The practical abandonment of it in our cities, has led to the withdrawal of the children, and the active interest, of the wealthy, from the common schools. Many parents who now send to private schools, would send to the common schools, if they were taxed annually for their support; and many more, if by that tax, and the interest it would excite, the common schools were made better than they now are.

Such was the condition of common schools in our cities, and such the course pursued and recommended, to improve it. The present condition of these schools is such as to justify the assertion, that some advance, at least, has been made in public action, and much more in public opinion, in regard to them. During the last four years, in every district but two, new schoolhouses have been built, or the old ones entirely re-modelled. In three of our cities, the number of children attending the common schools in the winter of 1842, was double what it was in the winter of 1838; and in the

six cities, the aggregate attendance is greater by fifteen hundred. There is a larger number of male teachers, of superior qualifications, and at higher wages, employed through the year. The number of primary departments, under female teachers, has increased. The course of instruction is more complete, and the variety of text books in the same school, and the schools of the same city, less. The supervision of committees is more thorough and active. And as at once the cause and effect of these improvements, and the pledge of greater, a spirit of inquiry is abroad in every city, on this whole subject. I cannot conclude this part of my report without referring to what has been done in the city of Middletown.

In 1838, there were four districts, with 885 persons over four, and under sixteen, years of age. Of this number, 276 attended the common schools. The poor, and those only who felt but little interest in the education of their children, sent to them. The schoolhouses were old, and very much out of repair. The studies were those ordinarily pursued in a common school. There was no uniformity of books, and the teachers were constantly changing. There was no money raised for their support, beyond the avails of public funds. The schools were seldom visited by parents, and only formally by the committee, to secure the public money. At this time, there were eight or nine private schools, taught by well qualified and well paid teachers, and including the children of those parents who cared most for education. The aggregate expense for tuition alone, in these schools, was three times as great as the whole expense of the common schools.

In 1839, after several public meetings, an entirely new system of public schools was adopted. The four districts were made a school society. Four primary schools, for children under nine years of age, under female teachers, and one high school with two departments, one for boys and the other for girls, with a male and female principal, were established. The books, studies, discipline, and management, of the schools, were intrusted to a board, or committee of eight members. In 1842, out of 849 children between the ages of 4 and 16, 675 are connected with the public schools, and among them are the children of the best educated and wealthiest families of the city. Three of the old schoolhouses have been repaired and fitted up, and one new one built, for the primary schools; and a large, substantial building, 72 feet by 54, capable of accommodating both departments of the high school, has been erected, at an expense of about \$8000. This house stands in the center of a spacious lot, affording large and separate play grounds for the boys and girls, and in respect to location, size, ventilation, light, conveniences for recitation, and all the essential features of a good schoolhouse, is superior to any in the other cities of the State. The regular meetings of the school society are now numerously attended, and not a week goes by without a visit to the schools from parents or strangers. The course of study embraces a thorough English education and a pre-

paratory classical one. A uniform set of class books is prescribed, and every scholar is supplied by their parents, or the committee, with the necessary books and stationery. The committee have met regularly every week for nearly three years, and one or more of their number has visited the schools every month. Nearly all the private schools have been given up, and a saving effected in this way to the parents, of nearly four thousand dollars a year. The entire expense of the public schools is nearly two thousand dollars less than was expended in the private schools in 1838, and the average expense per scholar, is less than it was at that time. The crowning glory of the whole is—that it is a practical illustration of what can be done to make common schools good enough for the richest, and cheap enough for the poorest, and thus to make the advantages of a good education common to the rich and the poor.

Some progress has also been made in the large central villages, by dividing the school into two departments, one for the older and the other for the younger scholars, and in a few instances by organizing a union district school.

Although much has already been accomplished in the cities and large villages of the state, and although there are individual schools of great excellence in several of them, still as a whole in all the essential features of a school system, the public schools as at present provided and sustained, are inferior to those in more than twenty other cities and towns of the same relative size, in other parts of New England. The superiority of the latter consists in the schoolhouses, the classification of the schools, the number of children attending school, the quality and quantity of instruction given, the liberality of the public appropriation, and the active interest taken by committees in their supervision and management. To these might be added the universal fact, that the schools are free, and that children from all classes, as to wealth, occupation, and education, are found in the same school room.

VIII. Prior to 1838, no inquiry had been instituted into the condition of education in the manufacturing districts, nor the extent to which the requisitions of the law, as to the duty of owners and proprietors of factories, and manufacturing establishments, to the children employed by them, were complied with.

Since that time, this whole subject has been investigated, and facts ascertained and published, which should have alarmed and aroused a community, which had made provision near two centuries ago, "that not a single child should be found unable to read the holy Word of God, and the good laws of the colony." It was found, that there were parents, born in Connecticut, who could sell their children into the ransomless bondage of ignorance, for the miserable pittance which their services would earn—that there were owners of factories who would employ such children, when they knew their earnings were made at the sacrifice of their education, and were applied to support the idle and dissipated habits of one or both of the parents—

that at one time, there were twenty-four children employed in a single factory, who could not write their names, and five, who could neither read or write—and that in not a single town had a board of visitation, as directed by law, been organized, to examine and ascertain the existence of such facts, and apply the remedy.

But apart from these, and other examples which might be cited, of the utter abandonment of the education of children employed in early, and frequently excessive, labor in factories, it was found that many who did attend school, did so irregularly, and without books, so that their school privileges were almost lost. The condition, too, of the houses of the work people, the want of libraries, lectures, and other means of intellectual and moral improvement, in many of our manufacturing villages, was such as to call loudly on the patriotism and benevolence of employers, and of all who regard it as the highest praise of a state, to have a healthy, moral, and intelligent population, for more systematic efforts at improvement.

This subject, in its various bearings, especially as connected with good common schools, lectures, libraries, &c., I have frequently discussed in my reports, public addresses, the *Journal*, and interviews with school committees, and gentlemen interested in it. The course which I have generally recommended in voluntary efforts has been,

1. To improve the physical and social condition of the manufacturing population, by making their homes more convenient and attractive, and attaching to each tenement a peice of ground for the cultivation of garden vegetables and flowers.

2. To provide, encourage, and sustain, all games and pursuits, of an innocent and rational character, such as are directly calculated to develope the physical frame, to counteract any unfavorable tendencies in their mode of employment, to inspire cheerful thoughts, and tend to promote better social relations, by being shared in by rich and poor, the more and the less favored in intellectual improvement.

3. To see that the district schools are organized on the best system, and kept open the year round, so that a portion of the children of the proper age might be kept at school punctually and regularly for at least half the year, or for such period as they did attend. The school in a manufacturing district should not only be as good, but better, than such schools in the country districts, to counteract the unfavorable tendencies of a monotonous and unintellectual employment. The studies, too, should be different, and some of them be adapted to improve the skill, and direct the inventive faculties, of the pupils, in the arts to which they are devoted during part of the year, and are likely to be for life. For this purpose, drawing, and the first principles of practical mechanics, and chemistry, should be taught at school, or in evening classes.

4. To establish evening schools, or classes, for such as are necessarily employed during the day, or may wish to pursue a particular study not taught in the day school.

5. To encourage and provide lectures in the winter season; either a regular course, on some department of science connected with the pursuits of the district; or a miscellaneous course, calculated to supply interesting and profitable topics of conversation, stimulate inquiry, direct the reading of the young, bring all classes together, and thus cultivate happier social relations.

6. To assist in the establishment of school and social libraries, and to contribute, from time to time, to the purchase of new books, and especially of that class, which relate to the history, biography, scientific principles, or improvement of the prevalent occupation of the inhabitants.

To enable and assist individuals to carry out these and other steps for improving the condition of manufacturing districts and above all to prevent the continuance of existing abuses, some legislative action is necessary. For this purpose it has been recommended to the Legislature to provide,

1. That no child under 14 years of age shall be employed in any factory or manufacturing establishment more than eight hours during the day, and entirely prohibiting their employment at night.

2. That no child under that age shall be employed at all, unless such child can show a certificate of attendance on some day school, either public or private, for at least three months of the twelve next preceding.

3. That a penalty for any and every violation of such enactments should be paid by the person found guilty of so doing, for the use of the common school in the district.

4. That provision be made, or at least some inducement offered, for the establishment of libraries in every district in the State, manufacturing, as well as agricultural.

Although no legislative action has followed these recommendations, it is believed that individuals, committees and districts have been more interested in the attendance of the children, the improvement of the schools, and means of education generally, in manufacturing villages, than before. In some, a more vigorous public sentiment has been created, which, in an intelligent community, will throw around children a protection stronger than law. In others, voluntary associations have carried out some one or more steps of improvement. In others, individuals have contributed largely to establish libraries, and procure popular lectures. The manufacturing village of Greenville, can boast of better schoolhouses, a more complete system of public schools, a more numerous, as well as a larger average, attendance of children of the school age, than any city or village of the State. The efforts to improve the schools of this village, commenced earlier than 1838, but since that time, the two districts have united, two elegant, convenient, and even model, schoolhouses have been erected, a gradation of schools established, school apparatus provided, and the services of competent teachers, at the highest rate of wages, secured.

So important have I regarded this subject, in view of the probable growth of the manufacturing interest in Connecticut, that I have prepared a

separate report on the "*Legal provisions respecting the education and employment of children in factories*," &c., in this country and in Europe. In this document, I have added an account of what has been done by the proprietors of a small manufacturing village in England, and by the largest manufacturing town in the United States, to promote the physical, social, moral, and intellectual improvement, of the manufacturing population. Accompanying it, is a mass of valuable evidence, under the head of "*Education and Labor*," showing the importance of a good common school education to every form of human industry. I intended to have added some evidence of the same character, communicated by gentlemen in this State who have now, or have had, large numbers of persons in their employ; but it would only swell the document to an unreasonable length.

IX. In 1838, the difficulties which still impair so largely the usefulness of many of the district schools, had not been, sufficiently investigated, with a view to discover their origin, or ascertain the remedies.

These difficulties arose principally from the want of systematic classification and regulation of the schools—from the crowding together of a large number of scholars of every age, in a great variety of studies, and greater variety of text books, under one teacher in the summer, and another teacher in winter, and not under the same teacher for two summers or two winters in succession. Under a good teacher these difficulties are almost insurmountable, and under a poor one, they defeat, in a great measure, the usefulness of the schools. These evils were increased by the late and irregular attendance of the children, and the want of interest, visitation and supervision, on the part of parents and committees.

To expose and discuss these difficulties and evils, to induce parents to correct such as grew out of their own neglect and want of co-operation, and clothe the proper school authorities with power to remove and correct such as did not, has been a leading object of my labors. The mode of doing this, will be seen in the two following topics of this report.

X. In 1838, in city and country, in agricultural and manufacturing districts, there was a great want of an intelligent, active, inquiring, and generous public interest in the administration and improvement of the common school system. An indifference, wide spread and profound, characterized the action and views of individuals, and of the community, on the whole subject.

All this was indicated in the returns made by school committees to the Comptroller, under the resolution of the Legislature of 1837. It was evident from the results of personal inquiries made, in the winter and spring of 1838. It was complained of universally by members of the General Assembly of that year; and "to discover the origin of this apathy and neglect so much complained of, and to enlist the co-operation of virtuous and intelligent parents in every district," was one of the main objects proposed by the Joint Select Committee on Common Schools, for organizing

this Board. It was felt and encountered by me in the outset of my labors, as the great cause of the inefficiency of the school system, the prolific source of the evils which destroyed, in a great measure, the usefulness of the schools, and the great obstacle to be overcome in the work of improving and perfecting the means for the more thorough and complete education of all the children in the State. This want of interest—this paralyzing and disheartening indifference on the part of individuals and the community, was shown and felt in various ways.

The attendance at the regularly warned meetings of school societies and districts was thin, and the doings of such meetings confined principally to the transaction of such business as was absolutely necessary to the receiving of the school fund dividends. In six of the largest societies of the State, the annual meeting for 1837, duly warned, was attended by three persons. In two others, including an aggregate of more than thirteen hundred voters, the meeting was adjourned for want of a quorum to transact business. In 1838, the regular business of several of the societies, was gone through by the moderator, the clerk, and society committee. In ten others, which included an aggregate of more than eighteen thousand voters, the aggregate attendance at the annual meeting, was eighty persons, or eight to each society. In thirty more, the annual school officers for the society and district, were chosen by an average of less than thirty voters, while the ordinary business of the town, on the same day, was transacted by an average of more than one hundred persons. In many of the districts, the first and main business, was, not to see how many immortal minds were to be improved, and how many children were to be made good citizens, useful men and women, the blessings of this world, and the blessed of another, but how much public money was to be received, and then to square the expenditures to the receipts from this source. The great questions, where and for what can a well qualified teacher be had, what can be done to make the schoolhouse comfortable, convenient, and healthy; to secure the attendance of every child of the proper school age; to supply every poor child with books, and the whole school with a uniform set of class books, with a globe, maps, black board, and a library, were not agitated. To make the quarter bill as small as possible, the practice, if not the maxims of many districts, were, "anything will do for a teacher," "any place for a schoolhouse," and "absolutely nothing for apparatus."

The plainest requirements of the school law had been disregarded. In several instances, the school money had been appropriated to other purposes than to the paying and boarding of instructors. Schoolhouses had been repaired, and fuel supplied with it. In others, it was paid to teachers who had never been duly appointed and approved; and, indeed, to some, to whom a certificate of qualification had been refused by the legal committee. It was expended on schools, which had not been visited at all by the school visitors, and in several instances, where the two visits required

by law, were made on the same day; and, in one instance, where the school had been called together after it had been dismissed, and examined twice in the same afternoon. The certificate of the society committee, which is the only effectual check provided by law on the improper application of the public money, was not unfrequently drawn without any written or personal evidence before the committee, as to the manner in which the provisions of the law had been complied with. In one county alone, it was ascertained that sixteen such certificates had been returned to the Comptroller, from as many school societies, in each of which, one or more of the violations above referred to, had occurred, according to the testimony of the teachers themselves.

But not only was the regular supervision of the schools, and administration of the system marked by great coldness, indifference, and even palpable disregard of the requirements of law, but the great points connected with the internal economy of a school, were but little attended to. The regular and punctual attendance of all the children of a district at school, the advantages of a gradation of schools, of parental visits to the school, of an association of the teachers for mutual improvement, and the visiting of each other's schools, and a public examination of all the schools at least once a year, the evils arising from the improper location, construction, and furniture of schoolhouses, from a diversity of text books in the same study, from a multiplicity of studies in the same school, from the neglect of the small children and the primary studies, from a constant change of teachers, from the employment of teachers not properly qualified, from severe and unnatural punishment, from the want of suitable apparatus, from the mechanical process of teaching reading, arithmetic, and other studies, from the neglect of moral education, and other subjects, were but little thought of and discussed in the public assembly, in the newspapers of the State, among individuals, or in the reports of school committees. There was but one school society which had made any provision for a written report respecting the condition and improvement of the schools as the basis of such discussions.

Among a class of the community, an impression prevailed, that schoolhouses, studies, books, mode of management, and supervision, which were good enough for them forty years ago, were good enough for their children now, although their churches, houses, furniture, barns, and implements of every kind, exhibited the progress of improvement. Among others, the principle was avowed, that the school fund was intended for the exclusive benefit of the poor, and that to support the common school by a tax on the property of the whole community was rank oppression on those who had no children to educate, or chose to send them to private schools. Among another and increasing class of the community, who despaired of effecting any improvement in the common schools, private schools, of every name and grade, were exclusively patronized. Opinions and practices like these, would destroy the original and beneficent character of the common school, and strike out from it the very principle of progression.

The little interest taken in the common schools, was not only shown directly in the above ways, but was more fatally exhibited indirectly, in the subordinate place assigned it among other objects in the regards and efforts of the public generally, as well as of that large class of individuals who were foremost in promoting the various benevolent, patriotic, and religious enterprises of the day. A meeting for the choice of school officers, or the improvement of the schools, would, by nine individuals out of ten, be considered of less importance than a political caucus, or the choice of the most subordinate officer, civil or military. An examination of all the schools of a society, for the purpose of awarding public preference to faithful teachers, or worthy, talented, and industrious scholars, an exhibition of plans and specimens of improved schoolhouses, school furniture and apparatus, or of more certain and speedy methods for developing the moral and intellectual faculties of children, would attract far less attention, and excite far less feeling, than a cattle show, a ploughing match, or an exhibition of specimens of improved farming utensils, or of labor-saving machinery of any description. The claims of the Temperance, the Bible, the Missionary, and other benevolent enterprises, were urged, through the press, the pulpit, and the lecture room, upon the attention and contributions of the community, while that cause, which, if promoted, would carry along with it every other good cause, had scarcely an advocate, or was not honored by any personal or pecuniary sacrifice.

Such were some of the ways, direct and indirect, in which a want of interest in our common schools was seen and felt. To awaken this interest, to restore the common school to the place it once occupied in the regards of the patriot, the philanthropist, and the christian, to enlist the hearty co-operation of parents, and of the whole community in the work of improvement, and to breathe into every department of its administration, the quickening breath of a public interest, the press, the living voice, voluntary associations, all the agencies, indeed, by which the public mind was reached and informed on other subjects, were appealed to, and, it is believed, not altogether in vain. A brief survey of these agencies, must conclude this topic of my report.

1. Public meetings for addresses and discussions on the subject.

A series of public meetings in the several counties, was the earliest step taken to give a vigorous and general impulse to the cause. These meetings were numerous attended by committees, teachers, and the friends of school improvement generally. They collected together those who were most interested in the subject, from nearly every town in the State, and representing every political party, and religious denomination. At these conventions, one or more addresses, calculated to foster a salutary zeal, to disseminate information, and bring all hearts and hands to a united effort were made, and were followed by statements and discussions respecting existing defects and desirable improvements in the organization and administration of the school system, and the government and

instruction of the schools. From these conventions, many a friend of school improvement returned to his own town and district full of the spirit and energy which springs from the sympathy of numbers in the same pursuit, to animate others, scatter information, try proposed plans of improvement, and organize local associations for the general object. If the efforts of the Board had stopped here, they would have infused the leven of a new life into the public mind. As an evidence of the impulse communicated, it was stated in my first report, from information then before me, that during the foregoing winter, one or more addresses on this subject were delivered in one hundred and fifteen school societies, and that in upwards of fifty, voluntary associations were formed, to carry out the recommendations of the conventions.

After the first year, similar meetings were held for a smaller number of towns, and finally for a single town. During the past year, I endeavored to enlist sufficient aid to hold a public meeting for addresses and discussions on the subject, in every school society which I had not previously visited, and through the co-operation of school visitors, in every school district. The last object has been accomplished in a few societies. The first was accomplished in nearly every society in five out of the eight counties. The reports of the Rev. Dr. Field of Haddam, who, in the course of the last three years, has visited most of the towns in Middlesex and New London counties, and of Mr. William S. Baker, who has attended and addressed eighty-six meetings in Litchfield, Hartford, Tolland, and Windham, counties, are herewith annexed.

In the course of the four years, I have addressed one hundred and forty-two public meetings in relation to common schools, and secured the delivery of more than three hundred addresses on the same topics, from gentlemen every way qualified for the work. This number includes those only who have prepared and delivered addresses on my personal, or written, application. I have reason to believe, that at least an equal number have been made by clergymen, school visitors and others, at their own option, or the invitation of local associations.

2. By addresses to children in the schools.

This course has been adopted by me in most of the schools which I have visited, and by Dr. Field, Mr. Baker, and others. In some societies, the school visitors have always made this a special object in their regular visits. These addresses are found invariably, to interest the parents through the children.

3. By voluntary associations of parents and others in towns, school societies, and districts, for the improvement of schools.

In many societies, these associations have been very successful in awakening public interest by means of addresses and discussions. These associations have lately assumed a new form, and in this way, promise to become the most efficient instrumentality for awakening public interest, and acting directly on the schools, which has thus far been applied. I refer to the formation of such

associations among the mothers, and ladies generally, of a district, to improve the common school. From the outset of my labors, I have aimed to enlist the active and zealous co-operation of females, and of mothers especially, in this work. They stand at the very fountain of influence. The cleanliness, dress, manners, and punctuality, of the children, and the review or preparation of the school lessons at home, depend mainly on them. By their associated, or even individual, efforts, a revolution in our common schools can be effected. Let the mothers of a district read, converse with each other, and become well informed as to what constitutes a good school, and the fathers and voters generally, will hear of it. Let them visit the places where their little children are doomed to every species of discomfort, and improvements in the seats, desks, and ventilation of the school room will soon follow. Let them invite the teacher to their homes as a friend and companion, and they will give the teacher of their children her proper position in society, and elevate her in the respect of her scholars. Let them become acquainted with the fact, that many children are kept from the school, especially in cities, for want of proper clothing, and their ready and active charity will soon supply the want. As an illustration of what may be done in this new form of associated effort, to interest at least one half of the community who have been practically excluded from all active concern in our schools, I have appended an account of the "Female Common School Association of the East District of Kensington." This association was formed under the direction of Mrs. Emma Willard, the late distinguished Principal of the Troy Female Seminary. Four similar associations have already been formed in other towns.

4. By an association of the teachers of a town or school society.

These associations were recommended, with the expectation that the sympathies of a common pursuit, the mutual benefit of each other's experience, and the discussion of topics which concern their common advancement, would not only attach them to each other, and increase their self-respect, but impress the community with the importance of the profession from its aggregate strength, and with its claims to a higher social and pecuniary consideration.

5. By a meeting of all the schools of a town or school society, with their teachers and parents, at least once a year.

This course was recommended, not only as in accordance with former practice, but as well calculated to impart a healthy stimulus to the teachers and scholars of the several schools, and awaken a lively interest in parents. I have attended several such meetings, and with the highest gratification at the interesting character of the exercises, and the manifest pleasure of the children, teachers and parents. The occasion has always been improved by appropriate addresses. In some towns, the first impulse to the schools and the parents was imparted by such meetings.

6. By the reports of school visitors on the condition of the schools.

These reports, when prepared with fidelity, and minuteness, and especially when the relative standing of the schools, and of the scholars in the several schools, was specified, have made a powerful impression on the public mind. In some cases, these reports have been read in a public meeting called for that purpose; in others, in the several districts; and in a few instances, they have been printed, and circulated through every family. I know of but one instance where such a report was prepared, previous to 1838.

7. By the Connecticut Common School Journal.

Amid the jarring conflicts of party, and the louder claims of sectarian and other interests, the peaceful, and unobtrusive cause of education received but little attention from the public press generally, either political or religious. It was felt, that a Journal, kept sacredly aloof from the disturbing influences of party or sectarian differences, and made the organ of communication between committees, teachers and the friends of education in different parts of the State, the depository of all laws relating to schools, and of opinions on questions connected with their administration, and the vehicle of extended discussions and information on the whole subject, would be highly serviceable in awakening an active, intelligent and efficient spirit in forwarding the cause.

8. By Lyceums, Lectures and Libraries.

In ascertaining the means of popular education, and forming plans for its improvement, this class of institutions could not be omitted. They aim to supply the defects of early elementary education, and to carry forward that education far beyond the point where the common school of necessity leaves it. They have been found and can be made still more useful in bringing the discoveries of science and all useful knowledge, to the fireside, and workshop of the laborer; in harmonizing the differences and equalizing the distinctions of society; in strengthening the virtuous habits of the young, and alluring them from vicious tastes and pursuits; and introducing new topics, and improving the whole tone of conversation among all classes. In this way, they create a more intelligent public opinion, which will inevitably, sooner or later, lead to great improvement in the common schools, as well as in all other educational institutions and influences. But apart from their indirect influences, these institutions open a direct avenue to the public mind, by the opportunities for public addresses and discussions on the subject which they afford. These opportunities have been improved to a very great extent.

In the course of the last four years, the number and usefulness of these institutions have been rapidly extended. In all of the cities, and in many of the large villages, courses of lectures on various topics of public interest have been delivered to large assemblages of people, and from the returns of six public libraries alone, it appears that more than ten thousand volumes have been added, while the number of persons having access to them has increased more than twenty fold.

By the intelligent agitation of the subject, which has resulted from the application of these various

means for reaching and informing the public mind much good has already been accomplished, and the way opened for still further improvement, unless the causes fail to operate which have heretofore governed the progress of society.

XI. In 1838, the law respecting school societies and schools, was scattered through various acts, was imperfect in many of its provisions, and needed a thorough and careful revision.

The main features were substantially as they were left in the revision of 1798, but these were overloaded with amendments and additions, that made it exceedingly difficult to understand what the law was. In the course of a half century, the circumstances of society had, in many respects, changed, and it would be strange, that a system of schools, even if well adapted in all its details to its wants then, should be so now. The direct tendencies of our mode of supporting schools, the demand for a wider range of studies, and the multiplication of school books, called for additional legislation. And if legislation on any subject was ever characterized by patient research, careful consideration and harmonious action, it is the legislation of Connecticut for the last four years in regard to common schools.

In 1838, the acts "to provide for the better supervision of common schools," after the careful consideration of a large committee of both Houses, was passed with a single dissenting voice. Any further legislation on the subject was deferred till the actual condition of the schools could be ascertained.

In 1839, various amendments to the law, enlarging the powers of school districts and defining the duties and provisions for the accountability of school officers, were proposed in the report of the Board. These propositions, with others, received the attention of a committee of both Houses, representing equally the political parties, and were embodied in the "Act concerning schools" by an almost unanimous vote.

In 1840, no further legislation was attempted, except to disseminate information respecting the schools of our own and other states, among the several districts, and to request the Board to prepare a draft of a revised school law.

In 1841, this draft was prepared and presented. To assist the Board and Legislature in revising and consolidating the various laws relating to the education of children and schools, the history of each enactment from 1650 to 1840 was traced, and the views of school visitors and others who had been connected with the administration of the system, as to the practical operation and defects of every feature of the law as it stood, were collected and compared.

This draft, with other documents, was referred to the committee on education, by whom the various provisions were discussed, in daily sessions, for several weeks. Several important alterations were made by the committee, most of whom had been teachers and school committees, and all were deeply interested in the improvement of the schools. This committee reported unanimously a bill, which was discussed in both Houses, apparently with a

single view of making its provisions more clear and acceptable. After several alterations, both in the House and Senate, the bill passed without any dissenting voices, in the form in which it now stands in the "Act concerning common schools."

No essential alteration was made in the great features of our school system, and its administration depends, as before, on the voluntary action of school societies and districts, and the personal co-operation of parents. I will notice briefly the most important alterations in the detail of the school law, in substantially the same language which was used in recommending their passage.

1. The powers of school districts are enlarged.

Every school district can now elect its own committee, establish one or more schools, employ one or more teachers, and provide suitable school rooms, furniture, apparatus, and library. For the want of these powers, a majority, in many districts, were prevented from carrying out many desirable improvements in their schools.

2. No new district can be formed, or existing one altered, so as to be left with less than forty children between the ages of four and sixteen, except by application to the General Assembly.

The object of this limitation on the formation and alteration of districts, was, to arrest the process of subdivision, by which so many districts were reduced below the ability to maintain a good school for a suitable length of time in a commodious and healthy schoolhouse. It was found, in districts numbering less than forty children, that the schoolhouses were small, inconvenient, and objectionable on the score of health; the compensation of teachers low, and the school sessions short, with long vacations between. In their eagerness to bring the school nearer to every family, the quantity and quality of education given there, was reduced below the average standard. The best schools were found in the large districts, where the children were classified under different teachers, or in the districts numbering over 40, and under 60, children, with an average attendance of about 40 scholars, under a well paid, and well qualified teacher, and continued nine or ten months in the year.

The inconveniences of a large district can be more effectually obviated, by dividing the scholars into two schools, than by creating two districts, and thus weakening the ability of both to erect a suitable schoolhouse, and employ a teacher of the right qualification. Some of the most flourishing districts in the State have been ruined by this process of sub-division.

3. Provision is made for the union of two or more districts, for the purpose of maintaining a union school for the older children of the associated districts, while the younger children are left to attend in the several districts, under female teachers.

The union of school districts thus authorized, obviates many of the difficulties and evils of common schools as they are, and secures a much higher degree of improvement with the same means. In a large portion of the district schools, the ages of the scholars range from 4 to 16, or

vol. iv., no. 15.—2.

rather from 3 to 18; the studies extend from the first rudiments, to the branches of an academical education; the classes are as numerous as the various studies, increased by the variety of text books in the same branch; and the teachers are constantly changing, from male to female, and from season to season.

Now the plan of union districts, leaving the younger children by themselves, and including the older children together, cuts down by one half the variety of ages, studies, and classes. It enables the teacher to adopt methods of classification, instruction, and government, suited to each grade of schools. It gives much longer, and, in many cases, permanent employment, to female teachers in the primary schools, and dispenses with the services of all but the best qualified male teachers. It enables the same amount of funds to pay higher wages, for a longer time; for it will be found that the money actually expended in three adjoining districts on three female teachers at the average wages, say \$8 per month, for four months in the summer, and on three male teachers at \$17 per month, for four months in the winter, will employ three female teachers for six months at \$12 per month, and one male teacher for four months at \$21 per month.

It enables the same teacher to accomplish much more in a shorter time, and the scholar to receive a much larger share of the attention of the teacher, when the classes are few, and the number of each class large, and of the same age and proficiency. While it secures a more thorough attention to the primary studies and the young children, it admits of the introduction of a much wider range of study in the common school, thus equalizing, in a measure, the education of society.

4. The establishment of a common school of a higher grade, for the older and more advanced children of a society, is made more practicable.

Such a school has always been recognized in the school system of Connecticut since its first establishment in 1650. Every town, as soon as it numbered one hundred families, was obliged "to set up a grammar school, the master of which must be able to instruct youths for the university." By a subsequent act, each county town was obliged to maintain a free school, in which, among other branches, the Latin and English languages were to be taught. This law remained till 1798, when every school society was authorized, by a vote of two thirds, to establish such a school, and to draw its proportion of public money.

The absence of this class of schools is a serious defect in our school system. The place which they should occupy in our system is filled by private schools, in which the tuition is so high as effectually to exclude the children of the poor, or else the studies appropriate to these schools are crowded into the district school to the manifest injury of the primary studies. This state of things is, in every point of view, disastrous. It limits common education to the standard of the district school, and impairs the usefulness of that. It grants a monopoly of a better education to comparatively few in the society. It divides the funds and in-

terest appropriated to educational purposes, and thus renders both portions less efficacious in the general result than the whole would be.

Each school society should not only be empowered, but required, to maintain one or more common schools of a higher order, either as a central school for all the older children of the society, or as union schools, for the older children of two or more associating districts. This would correct the radical evil of the district schools, by cutting down by one half the variety of ages, studies, and classes, lead to the permanent employment of female teachers for the younger children, and do away with most of the difficulties of discipline, at the same time that it would carry forward the education of the older scholars, to a point now only attained in private schools, and rear up a class of better qualified teachers for all the common schools.

One thing is certain, this class of schools will exist. If they are not established and supported as public schools, they will be as private schools. In the former case they become an unmixed good; in the latter, their benefits are confined to the rich, and their bad influence, in the main, falls on the district school, and the social relations of the poor.

5. The employment of competent teachers for at least one third of the year, is made more certain, by providing, 1. that no person shall be employed to teach in a common school, without a certificate of examination and approbation from the school visitors; 2. that no certificate shall be granted to any person not found qualified to teach spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, and grammar, thoroughly, and the rudiments of geography and history; 3. that no district shall be entitled to any portion of the public money, unless the school has been kept by a teacher with such a certificate, for at least four months in the year; and 4th, that the public money shall be applied to paying the wages of such teacher, or teachers, and for no other purpose whatever.

The employment of an incompetent teacher can only be effected by the assent of the teacher, the school visitors, and the district committee, against the express provision of the law. The last provision, combined with the progressive increase of the dividends of the school fund, and the higher appreciation of the services of teachers, has increased very much the average wages of teachers in the State since 1839. Prior to that time, the law did not enforce the keeping of the school for any prescribed period, and, in consequence, some of the small districts only kept for two or three months in a year.

6. Every teacher in a common school is required to keep a register of the names, ages, parents, and attendance of every pupil, for the inspection of parents, district committees, and visitors, and to make out a certified abstract of the same at the close of the school.

Without a school register accurately kept, there is no original authenticated source of school statistics—nothing by which the aggregate or average school attendance can be ascertained. Without it, it can never be known how far children are

cheated out of their natural right to an education, and apprentices and others to the school privileges which the law and their indentures entitle them to. Without it, the district, or the society, or the State can never know how large a portion of children of the school age are not benefited by the public money, on account of their never entering the district school, and to how much greater extent the privileges of the school are lost, by the late and irregular attendance of those who are enrolled among the scholars of the school.

7. The powers and duties of school visitors are, in some respects, modified, and in all, more clearly defined, for the purpose of securing the more thorough inspection and superintendence of the schools.

Prior to 1798, these powers and duties devolved on the civil authority and select-men of each town, but in the revision of the school law, in that year, they were transferred to a distinct class of officers, denominated visitors, or overseers of schools, elected by each society, and charged exclusively with them. This change proved highly advantageous for a time, but from the want of a more specific enumeration, and some modification of their powers, to adapt them to the altered circumstances of the schools, and of society, the great object of their appointment from year to year, in a measure, failed. When first appointed, the common school was the main reliance of all classes, for the elementary education of children, and there was, therefore, connected with the discharge of their duties, strong parental, as well as the ordinary official, and benevolent interest. The number of districts were not as large, the schools were kept for only one portion of the year, and the same teachers continued in the employment and in the same district, for a longer time; a change in these particulars has more than doubled the demands on the time and attention of school visitors. The course of instruction was confined to spelling, reading, arithmetic and writing, and the number of books was limited to one, or at most, two text books in each study. The standard of qualification was therefore confined; there was but little need of regulations as to studies or books. In 1838 it was ascertained that there were eight, and sometimes twelve, different studies in the same school, and more than two hundred different books used in the several studies. There were one hundred and six different authors in the three studies, spelling, reading and arithmetic. Formerly, there was a high degree of public consideration attached to the office, as well as a lively interest in all that concerned the administration of the school system. The result of the whole was ascertained to be, that the mode of discharging the duties of inspection and superintendence, which is the very life of a school system, and determines, in a great measure, the character of the schools, was inefficient, irregular, and formal at best. To remedy these defects and irregularities, the powers and duties of school visitors are more distinctly defined in the act of 1839.

First.—They may prescribe rules and regula-

tions respecting the studies, books, classification and discipline of the schools.

Under this provision the visitors have, in some societies, cooperated with the teachers in arranging his classes, enjoined the strictest attention to the primary branches, and prescribed or recommended a set of books for the several studies. This last step, in connection with the provision of the law requiring district committees to see that scholars are supplied with books, by their parents, or at the expense of the district, has lead already in many societies, to the removal of a most serious evil.

Secondly.—They must withhold a certificate from such persons as are not found qualified to teach certain specified branches, and annul the certificates of such as shall prove, on trial, to be unqualified and unfaithful. Low as the requirements of the law are, the fixing of a minimum of qualification has debarred some from offering themselves as candidates, who had previously been teachers; and has sustained the examining committees in rejecting those whose chief recommendation was their cheapness, or their relationship to some member of the district committee.

Thirdly.—They must visit all of the common schools at least twice during each season of schooling.

One of these visits must be made near the beginning of the term, and the other near the close, so that a right direction can be given to the school, and the final progress be judged of. No adequate substitute can be provided for frequent, faithful, and intelligent visitation of schools, carrying along with it wise counsel for the future to teacher and pupils, encouragement for past success, and rebuke for neglect, defective discipline, and methods of instruction. The mode of visiting should be such as to make known to all the schools the superior methods of any one, and to awaken a generous rivalry between the teachers and scholars of the several schools.

Previous to 1839, the summer schools were not visited at all in many societies. In most, the mode of visiting schools, by dividing them up among a large board, was such, that no one member of the board was acquainted with all the schools, and thus qualified to compare the schools with each other, to point out common defects, and common remedies, or to make general the peculiar excellencies of any one school. No responsibility was felt—no previous preparation made—no systematic measures pursued, and no interest awakened in the public mind, or foundation laid for future progress, in carefully prepared reports of their doings, or on the condition and improvement of the schools. There were some honorable exceptions to this state of things. There were now and then scattered over the State, a board of visitors, some member of which, (usually the clergyman of the place,) had examined all the teachers, and visited all the schools according to law, for ten, twenty, and in two instances, thirty years. But even these 'old standards' were getting tired of their laborious, unpaid, and unthanked services, and the duty was divided among the different members of the committee, to make the labor less to each

individual. To correct the evils of inefficient, irregular, and mere formal visitation, several societies in 1837 and 1838, reduced the number of visitors, and provided a small compensation for their services. The results were so favorable, that the legislature in 1839 provided, that—

Fourthly.—They may appoint a committee of one or two persons, to exercise all the powers, and perform all the duties of the whole board, under their advice and direction, and receive one dollar a day for the time actually employed.

This provision secures the counsel and general co-operation of a large number, selected for their supposed intelligence and interest in the subject, and the more active labor of one or two persons, in the examination of teachers, the visitation of schools, and the preparation of reports and returns respecting their condition and improvement. The compensation provided, in no case for more than two persons, is small, and in some cases is barely sufficient to pay the expenses to and from the distant districts. The duties imposed on the committee are important and numerous, and require the services of a class of men who cannot afford to spend the time demanded, without some slight remuneration—much less incur expense in so doing. A similar compensation is made to the same class of officers in the states of New York and Massachusetts. Where the work of visitation is now faithfully performed, by securing the services of competent persons, the value of the school is more than doubled, by the addition of this small amount for compensation.

Fifthly.—They must prepare, when required by this Board, and annually for their several societies, a written report as to the condition of the schools, and plans and suggestions for their improvement.

This is a new and important feature in the school law. It secures faithfulness on the part of the visitors. It leads to inquiries and reflection on the whole subject of education, both in its general principles and in its practical details, as a necessary preparation for the work. It enables any member of the society to know the condition of the schools out of his own district. It enables every district to profit by the successful experience of every other in the same society. It provides the material for judicious action in reference to future improvement, on the part of committees, districts, societies, and the State.

In the course of the four years, the preparation of the reports and returns must have enlisted the services of at least three thousand individuals, scattered through the several school societies. It would seem impossible, that so many minds, or even a single mind in each school society, could be directed to an investigation of the actual condition of the schools, and the devising of plans and suggestions for removing defects and extending excellencies, without giving an impulse of the most salutary kind to the cause of common school improvement.

8. School societies are now authorized to distribute the public money in such a manner as to aid the small districts by giving to each at least fifty dollars, and to induce every district to secure

the full and regular attendance of all the children, by making their receipts depend on the aggregate attendance for the year.

These provisions, when their beneficent character is understood, will go far to diminish the striking irregularities in the means of education enjoyed by children in different districts, and to remove one of the most serious evils under which the schools now suffer.

9. No child can now be excluded from any school on account of the inability of his or her parent or guardian, or master, to pay any school tax or assessment, and all abatements of such taxes, must be paid out of the treasury of the town.

This provision re-asserts the cardinal principle of the common school system, and places the expenses for the education of the indigent, beyond what the State provides for them in common with others, on the whole community, as a matter of common interest and of common duty.

10. The progress of the school system, as well as of the schools, is secured.

This will be accomplished, 1. through the labors and reports of the school visitors; 2. by collecting the results of their labors and reports for the use of the Board and the legislature; 3. by disseminating the information thus collected from every society, and respecting every school, back again in the reports of the Board, and by the labors of this office. A valuable suggestion from any society becomes the property of the whole State. The exposure of an evil in any one school, will lead to its correction in all, and a single worthy practice becomes an example for all the rest. The good thus accomplished may not, and cannot, be seen in immediate or brilliant results, but information thus disseminated, like the light and the rain, will penetrate every dark and thirsty crevice, till a more vigorous life shall pervade the entire school system.

Without claiming for the labors and reports of this department any other merit than that of fidelity, minuteness, and general accuracy, it appears, that to them, the Legislature and the people are indebted for much important information respecting the condition of the common schools of our own State, and the school systems and methods of instruction in other states and countries; and that in consequence of this information, and the means which have been employed, to awaken attention and interest in the whole subject, serious defects in the administration and organization of our school system, and the classification, instruction, and government of the schools, have been exposed, discussed, and in part corrected.

So far as these defects resulted from the want of power in school districts, or the specific enumeration of the duties of school officers, or a system of accountability on the part of all intrusted with its administration, they have been remedied in a careful revision of the school law. So far as they grew out of a want of interest, information, or liberality on the part of parents, committees, and districts, they are disappearing before a more just appreciation of the nature, means, and end of education. So far as they depend on the character of the teacher, and his or her knowledge of wise methods of instruction and government, they will be remedied as the means are improved for giving the greatest practical elevation

and efficiency to the profession of common school teacher. The full effects of the measures of the Board, if persevered in, cannot be seen, until at least one generation of children have grown up under the influences of a more enlightened, liberal, and vigorous public opinion in relation to this whole subject, which must be at once the cause and effect of an improved state of the schools.

Among the visible and immediate results, not of compulsory legislation, but of the voluntary efforts of parents, committees, and districts, acting on the information and impulse given directly and indirectly by the measures of the Board, the following may be specified.

The attendance at society and district school meetings is more numerous.

More than fifty new schoolhouses have been built, and a much greater number repaired after approved models, and more has been done in this respect within four years, than for twenty years before.

School visitors are more strict in their examination of teachers, and regular and vigilant in visiting the schools as required by law.

A uniform set of books in all the schools of a society has been in some instances prescribed, and in others recommended, by the proper committee.

The evils of crowding children of different ages in a great variety of studies, and in different stages of progress in the same study, under one teacher, has been obviated in more than one hundred districts, by employing a female teacher for the younger children and primary studies, and a male teacher for the older and more advanced scholars—and in a few instances, by the establishment of a central or union school for the older children of a society, or of two or more districts.

Facilities have been provided for such as wished to qualify themselves to become teachers, or improve their previous qualifications by an appropriate course of study, by a practical acquaintance with the duties of the school room, by access to good books on the principles and art of teaching, and by associations for mutual improvement.

Good teachers are employed for a longer period in the same school, and at higher wages; the average length of schools, and wages of teachers, are increased; the superiority of females as the educators of young children, is acknowledged, by their more general employment, and for a longer time.

More attention is now given to young children, and to the indispensable branches of spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic, and more use is made of visible illustrations.

Wherever the common schools have been improved, the number attending them has increased, and the attendance and expense of private schools has diminished; and thus the advantages of a good education have been made common to rich and poor. And as at once the evidence of past, and the pledge of future improvements, parents, and men of education and influence generally, are found more frequently visiting schools, discharging with zeal the duties of school committees, conversing and reading on the subject, and acquainting themselves with the efforts which are making in this and other countries to give a more thorough and complete education to every human being.

HENRY BARNARD, 2d.

Secretary of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools.

DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING REPORT.

FARMINGTON.

Farmington may be referred to, as one of the towns in the State which have given a uniform and liberal support to common schools. The standard of qualification for teachers, and the rate of wages have been higher than in any other town in Hartford county. Most of the improvements which have been adopted from time to time in the State have originated, or been early adopted here. The section of the school law of 1798, which provides for the appointment and other duties of school visitors, was copied by Gov. Treadwell, from the regulations which he had previously caused to be adopted by the town of Farmington in 1796. In 1837, a sub-committee of the school visitors were appointed to visit all the schools, and to report in writing, on their condition. This practice has been continued, and the reports are model papers of the kind. In 1839, the first union school for the older children of the adjoining districts was organized. In the summer and winter of 1840, all the teachers were invited to meet with the sub-committee for lectures and discussion of topics connected with the management and instruction of schools.

For the last two years, a meeting of all the schools, with their teachers and parents has been held for exercises in reading and spelling, and appropriate addresses.

The following letter from Dr. Porter, will be found interesting.

For thirty-six years I have been a school visitor in this town. In almost all of these years I have visited more or less of our schools in that office, and all of them in the office of pastor. Some of the wisest and best men among us have, from one time to another, been associated with me in this engagement. Such, however, have been the time and labor required by it, that there have been but few who could be persuaded to continue in it for any considerable number of years; and this although the visitations were distributed among a board of eight or nine persons, and no report was expected, and but little responsibility in public estimation was attached to the office. So difficult was it at last to get even the requisite form of visitation accomplished, and so little good appeared to result from it, done as it was, without system and carried out in no public school, that, at my own suggestion I believe, a proposition was made to the society, which it readily adopted, of giving out of its own funds, a moderate per diem allowance to any two of the visitors, who, at the appointment of the board, should visit all the schools at least twice in the season and make a full report at the annual meeting. The present is the fourth or perhaps fifth season since the change was made, and its results have been most happy. I speak with the more confidence on this subject, because the business of visitation immediately passed, as I insisted that it should, into other hands, and not until this season have I been charged with it, having in the mean time only occasionally called on the schools in the exercise of my pastoral duties. I am quite sure that within the last four years the standard of qualification in our teachers has been raised several degrees: that their diligence and zeal and devotedness to their work, have been still more increased; and that in consequence our schools have been advanced in all useful learning; that we have never before had so many good readers in our schools; nor so many trained to habits of thought; and so thoroughly taught what they have pretended to learn—as geography, grammar, history, arithmetic, &c. Some of our schools are yet very backward and in many things exceedingly far from what they ought to be; but the past winter there were none that had not a competent and faithful teacher, nor one in which there was not made a perceptible and commendable improvement. The general improvement in them which I have been happy to see, I attribute mainly to the present mode of visitation. Two persons, (or even one single person,) charged with the whole business, accomplish it far better than eight or nine could do, distributing it among them.

First, they feel the responsibility more. For one or two individuals to be charged with the superintendency of ten or twelve schools, is no light burden; requires no inconsiderable time and care; and involves interests not to be trifled with. Considerate men who take it upon themselves feel this, apply themselves to the work in good earnest, acquire an interest in it, and so do it thoroughly; but when it is divided up among six or eight, the responsibility also is divided, and the work if not absolutely neglected, is apt to be but slightly done.

Second they become better qualified for their work. Their eyes and ears are open to whatever comes in their way about school-keeping as a practical thing; they gather up valuable suggestions from books and teachers and others on the subject: they better know how a school ought to be kept and what improvements in the house, furniture, arrangements and discipline might be made. I hazard nothing in saying that many school visitors really know less about practical school-keeping than those whom they are appointed to superintend. Why should not this be expected, plain men as the greater part of them must be, and having concerns of their own quite sufficient for their care, unless this shall be devolved upon them with such singleness of delegation that they

shall feel themselves obliged in good faith to apply themselves to it in sober earnestness.

Third, they can better pursue a system of measures. Respecting the studies to be pursued, the books to be used and the rewards or other inducements to diligence and good conduct to be proposed, and whatever else pertains to the improvement of the schools, they can better exercise and carry into effect a uniform and consistent method of operation. Then also whatever improvement is made in one school they can suggest to another, and excite not only teachers and pupils but parents also to a laudable emulation. Something of this nature has been the result of our present mode of visitation, and much more I am persuaded will result from it if continued; but whatever is done by a dozen different men acting separately, must of necessity be done desultorily, and what is attempted to be done by one, may, at the next visitation, be undone by another.

Fourth, they make a report and spread out the condition of our schools before the community. Nothing of this so far as I know was ever attempted by the board of visitors, collectively, dividing among them the labor of visitation; nor could it be done from the personal knowledge which any one of them on that plan would have of the condition of all the schools. To this more than to any other single thing I attribute the good effect of the change adopted by ourselves. The report drawn up by Mr. Norton three or four years since cannot be soon forgotten. It was so faithful and unsparing that the negligent were roused; and it was at the same time so evidently kind and just, that there was no reply in the way of fault-finding to be made. Nor was this case a singular one. The effect of a particular and faithful annual report, though it may not always be so perceptible, can never be inconsiderable. When the teacher and the school, the parents and all the district, know that their well or ill-doing is to be spread out before the community in which they live, it is not in human nature for them to do just as they would do were all to pass off unnoticed.

For the two last seasons, early in March, we have invited the first classes of our schools to our central meeting house, for recitation in reading and spelling. The occasion has been pleasant and useful. The first season several schools declined attendance; the last only one. The house has been well filled with delighted listeners, and the recitations of the classes have been followed by addresses from gentlemen who have kindly come from abroad [value these occasions chiefly as serving to bring our schools before the public eye; calling attention to their state and their claims, and exciting interest in them.

We are much indebted to Mr. Hart, the much esteemed teacher of our academy in years past, for his disinterested labors for the benefit of our common schools, and particularly for the familiar private lectures which he gave the winter before last, as the result of his experience, to the teachers of our schools, invited to meet him weekly for that purpose.

Our Union school is upon the whole doing well. This season it has been a good deal better than it was the last. All the districts in the village are now united in it, and it is gaining on public favor; still it is not such that all parents among us are willing to send their daughters in the more advanced stages of their education. It ought to be as good as any academical school can be for English studies. I hope it may be. If the shortsightedness and instability of the public will, does not prevent, it will be.

Yours respectfully,

N. PORTER.

Female Association for the improvement of Common Schools.

H. BARNARD, Esq.

Secretary of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools.

Kensington, May 3, 1842.

Dear Sir:—The more special interest which the people of this school society have felt of late in our common schools, commenced during the winter of 1839, in which you lectured among us. Several meetings had been previously held, in the former part of the season, with a view to excite the attention of parents and the public generally, to the subject. At these meetings there were interesting discussions and addresses among ourselves. We were thus prepared, you will recollect, to welcome you in considerable numbers at the meeting held to hear you, and to enter somewhat into your views. A general meeting of the children and parents, and others in this and in the adjoining towns, was held, at the close of the schools in the spring. This seemed to produce a considerable effect in aiding the cause. In the following summer, Mrs. Willard, by invitation of the school society, took the supervision of the schools of the parish, subject to the advice and consent of the Visiting Committee. Through this arrangement, several improvements were introduced into the schools, and a good impulse was given to most, if not all of them, in respect to their discipline and studies. A general examination of the schools was

held in the autumn, at the meeting house, which proved highly satisfactory. In consequence of the feeling which had been excited, two of the school houses were re-modelled, and made more convenient to the purposes of instruction. The subject of female associations in behalf of schools, had been talked of from the time of Mrs. Willard's coming among us—the original suggestion was her's, and entered as a component part into the scheme she had devised for the benefit of common schools. It was in the following spring, I believe, and at her instance, an association of the kind was formed in the East District, and it has been sustained, with a good degree of spirit, ever since. A greater part of the mothers of the district belong to it, and a few unmarried ladies. They hold their meetings monthly, at which, plans of improvement, new studies, or new modes of instruction, are proposed and discussed; and measures from time to time are taken with a view to the interest of the schools, both of the teachers and the pupils. From the small yearly tax which they pay as members of the association, and from donations made to them, they have been able to furnish most of the text books used in the school. A small income, however, arises from a trifling sum paid by the children, or their parents, for the use of the books furnished by the association. This is more than sufficient, I believe, to repair the waste done to the books in their use, and to keep the proprietors in their original stock. From these several sources they have been able of late, to be in funds sufficient, together with assistance from abroad, to commence a library for the purposes of general reading and improvement. So that, in effect, they have two libraries—the one last named, and the other consisting of their school books, properly so called. As the books, many of them at least, that are used in school, are owned by the members of the association, and are kept in a case for that purpose, they are generally well preserved; and this care of books and of other articles, is one of the lessons inculcated on the pupils, under this new order of things, and not only inculcated, but enforced.

The meetings of the association are held monthly, at the schoolhouse, and if the school is in session at the time, the members hear the exercises of the children, and afterwards transact their business. The effect of these meetings on the school is visible. The children are delighted to see their mothers and older sisters at the school, and why should they not be, since at home they constitute the joy and the solace of the family circle? If the children are ever disposed to do well, it is then, and the desire to excel has been most marked and striking as connected with this kind, maternal, sisterly interview. Occasionally, the mothers who are qualified, hear a class recite at their houses, thus giving variety to the life at school, exciting an ambition to excel, and relieving at the same time, the teacher of some of her cares.

The result visible from such a course, viz. the action of the mothers in association, in addition to what has already been incidentally mentioned, is the deeper interest which they feel in the education and moral good of their children. Their convictions on this subject, I learn, are enhanced by every meeting they hold. Not only do they feel more, but they perform more, and make efforts which, aside from such an association, they would never think of making. Their children seem to stand in a relation to them, new, and more interesting than ever. Not only must they see that they are properly prepared for school, as to their person and dress—as to time and seasonableness of attendance, (one of the most important things next to going to school at all,) but they must have a care in respect to the lessons and studies to be learned—the child cannot be suffered to go without attention in this matter. And corresponding, is the actual result in most cases. Never have the children been so neat and tidy in appearance—never so willing, so ready, so desirous, to attend school—never have they gone thither with so suitable a preparation in their hearts and minds, to realize the objects of education—and never have they appeared so well in their behavior and studies. Exceptions there are in both, among the older pupils, but this is the general fact. Having been a school visitor for nearly six and twenty years, I have had an abundant opportunity for judging, and such is the decision at which I have arrived.

But not only is the female portion of the district interested to a greater extent than usual; but they bring their partners and brothers into a participation of their own plans and feelings. Hence more is said on the subject of schools, and more is done for them, than was wont to be. A greater willingness is manifested to provide the means of improvement. There is not wanting a co-operation, (except occasionally, perhaps, from some elderly person who has been brought up under a different regimen,) in all matters pertaining to the interest of the school.

As the effect of the whole, the schoolhouse has been better fitted for the object in view, together with its appurtenances and accommodations without. Trees have been planted around the building for the purposes of shade and ornament, and if the spirit of improvement goes on, shrubbery and flower plants will, ere long, decorate the ground. An additional room has been made, for the purpose of separate recitations, or as a place where the hats, bonnets, and outer clothing, are deposited, in nice order, and with

a labelled name attached to each nail or pin. In this room, also, is a wash stand, with all the necessary apparatus for ablution of the hands and faces of the children, as occasion may require, an article which only a woman's idea of neatness and comfort could have suggested. A clock was early set up in the school, but for some cause seems not to have been kept in repair. A neat chair and table have been furnished, and all the windows handsomely curtained. Add to this, a valuable apparatus has been purchased by the district for the school, consisting of an orrery, a tellurum, a globe, chart, and other contrivances designed to facilitate the progress of the children in their studies. The various committees of the association perform their duty with promptness and diligence—children who should be found to need the clothing or other comforts essential to their attendance, would be at once supplied; but happily the occasion has not existed for this species of charity among us. These are some of the particular results of the Ladies Association, as noticed among us, aside from the general healthful impulse which it has given to the cause of common school education—an impulse, I hope, to last not for a few months, or a few years, but from generation to generation.

Very respectfully and truly your friend, R. ROBBINS.

EDUCATION OF COM. SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Normal Department, Wesleyan Uni. Middletown.

This department was opened in the fall of 1841, by the appointment of the principal of the Middletown Male High School, to be Normal Professor in the W. U.

Its object is, to prepare teachers more perfectly for the business of instruction.

The means by which it is proposed to do this, are the following:

1. All candidates for this department must be at least sixteen years of age, and of unblemished moral character.
2. The course will occupy one year for its completion, and will consist of a critical study of those subjects usually taught in the schools of this country, together with a practical application of the knowledge thus acquired, under the inspection of the professor.
3. Lectures will be delivered during the course on the most approved methods of teaching, &c.
4. Those who remain during the whole time specified, will be admitted to the *Chemical and Philosophical* lectures of the University free of expense.
5. Any member of this department will be allowed to attend to other branches of study in the University by paying the usual fee.
6. The male City High School is used as a model school.
7. No charge is made for tuition in this department.
8. It is desired that all who commence should continue through the entire course: those who cannot spend this amount of time, however, will be allowed to enter for a shorter time, but not less than three months.
9. Each student on leaving, will be examined as to his qualifications for teaching and if satisfied the board of examination will give him a certificate of the same.

There are at this time six young gentlemen who are in a course of training according to the conditions above mentioned, and who give promise of a high degree of excellence in the profession. The prospect is favorable, and no reasonable doubt can be entertained that if carried out according to the expectations of its patrons, this department of instruction may be of essential advantage to the interests of popular education in the State.

Middletown, May, 1842.

Winsted High School.

Extract from a communication by H. E. Rockwell, Principal.

The whole number of students connected with this institution for the last three years, who have paid particular attention to their studies with reference to teaching, is eighty. Many of them had previously taught school from one to five years. During the last year there were thirty seven. These pupils were classed with the other members of the school, but a course of teaching has been pursued, which is adapted to similar studies in any school. Much attention is given to orthography and reading, as branches of primary importance. As exercises for composition, topics relating to the different branches of study, and management of schools, are given out. Practical instruction is also given to the teachers' class, by a critical analysis of every thing which is read, by a thorough explanation of mathematical principles, and familiar lectures on the classification and management of schools. They have also access to my library which contains many of the best works on education; and lyceums for debates, &c. are formed in the autumn and winter terms.

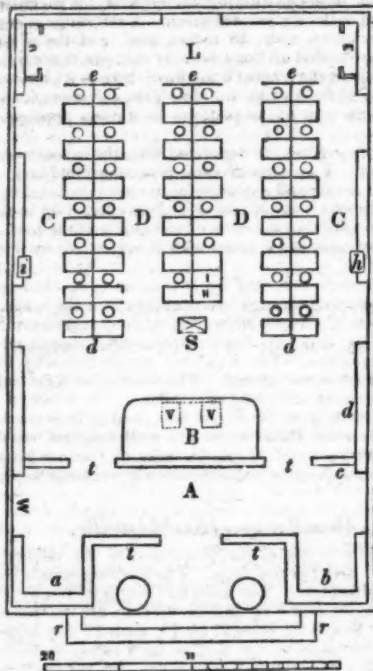
Ellington High School.

Extract from a communication by R. S. Rust, Principal.

During the past year we have had upwards of thirty students, who were preparing themselves to teach, and have since been en-

gazed as teachers, in the common schools of this State. In our instructions to this class, we have paid special attention to the best methods of teaching arithmetic, spelling, reading, and English grammar.

NEW SCHOOLHOUSES.



Washington District, Hartford.

This schoolhouse combines more of the essential features of a good schoolhouse, adapted to the circumstances of at least two or three districts in every town of the State, than any other yet built. This district numbers 73 children between the ages of 4 and 16, and the population is almost exclusively agricultural. The original plan, furnished at the request of the committee, contemplated two school rooms, and a recitation room, on the same floor, but was subsequently modified to adapt it to the most eligible site. In this way, the same amount of room was gained, at a trifle less expense, but some of the advantages of the first plan were sacrificed. The schoolhouse, however, as it now stands, is, in most respects, the best in the State, and has been built and fitted up with reference to the wants of the larger country districts.

Explanation.

Location. The building stands back 24 feet from the highway, on a dry, pleasant site, and at a distance from any other building. The lot includes a quarter of an acre, and is divided in the rear into two yards, one for the boys, and the other for the girls.

Material, Style, &c. It is built of brick, with some reference to the laws of good taste, as well as comfort and convenience. The wood work of the interior is painted to resemble oak.

Size. The exterior dimensions are 40 by 26 feet. The recess occupied by the columns is 4 by 8 feet: (A) entry or lobby is 8 feet wide; the upper school room is 30 by 25 feet, and 14 high in the clear; the space in front of the desk is 8½ feet wide; the side aisles (C C) are 5 feet wide; the space in the rear (L) 4 feet wide, and the aisles between the desks (D D) each 2 feet 7 inches; each range of desks is 18 feet long by 4 feet wide.

The entrance is in front into a lobby, (A) one side of which (a) is appropriated to the girls, and the other (b) to the boys, and each side is fitted up with shelves, and hooks for hats, and outer garments. Scrapers, (r r) mats, (t t) and a shelf (c) for pail, wash basin, towel, drinking cup, &c., are provided for the comfort and convenience of the children, and to enable the teacher to enforce habits of neatness, order and propriety.

The main school room is intended for the older scholars, and the lower for the younger, but for the present, the upper school room is fitted up with reference to its being occupied by both the older and younger. The description is confined mainly to this room.

Light. There are two windows on the north and two on the south side, each with 32 lights of 12 by 8 inch glass. These windows are inserted nearly 4 feet from the floor, are hung (both

upper and lower sash) with weights, and provided with venetian blinds painted green.

Ventilation. There is an opening near the floor, and another near the top of the room, into a flue (i) which leads into the open air. These openings can be enlarged, diminished, or entirely closed at the discretion of the teacher. The windows can also be conveniently lowered or raised both at the top and the bottom.

Temperature. The room is warmed by a close wood stove (S) the pipe from which is carried ten feet above the heads of the children into the smoke flue (A). The heat is regulated by a thermometer. When the lower room is occupied, it is proposed to heat both rooms, by a current of pure air warmed by a stove in the lower room after the manner of a furnace.]

Seats and desks for scholars. There are three ranges of seats and desks, capable of accommodating when completed 18 scholars each. In the first range the back seat is 17 inches high, and the desk, (the front edge) 29 inches from the floor, and the front seat 11 inches, and the corresponding desk 23 inches; in the second the same proportion is observed, except that the whole range is 1 inch lower, and the third, 1 inch lower than the second; i. e. the back seat of the third range is 15 inches and the corresponding desk 27 inches, and the front seat 9 inches and the desk 21 inches from the floor. Each scholar is provided with a chair, detached from the desk behind and fastened to the floor by an iron pedestal. Each range of desks is divided by a partition extending from the floor to four inches above the surface of the desk. This partition, to which the desks are attached, gives great firmness to each, and at the same time separates the scholars from each other and economizes room. Each desk is 2 feet long (it should be 2½ feet) and from 13 to 18 inches wide, with a shelf beneath for books. The upper surface of the desk except three inches of the most distant portion, slopes 1 inch in a foot. Along the edge of the slope and the level portion is a groove to prevent pens and pencils from rolling off, and in the level part an opening to receive a slate, (and there should have been another for the inkstand, with a butt or metallic lid to close over it. Each desk should also have a sponge, pen wiper, and pencil holder (a tin tube) attached to it.

To accommodate six of the oldest and largest scholars in winter, a desk like a table leaf, will be attached to the highest end of each range (e e e) and to accommodate the same number of the smallest in summer, and desks can be placed at the lowest end (d d). The small children will ultimately be accommodated in the lower room.

Platform, desk, &c. for teacher. The platform for the teacher, occupies the space between the doors which open into the school-room, and is 9 feet long, 4½ wide and 9 inches high. On it is a desk, 4 feet long by 2 feet wide, supported by two hollow pedestals, which will accommodate the books, &c., of the teacher. The lid of the desk is a slope, but can be supported by slides in the box of the desk, so as to be a level. From the platform the teacher can conduct the instruction of his classes, arranged around it, or on either side or in the area in the rear of the school, and at the same time have the rest of the school under his supervision.

Apparatus. Each desk is furnished with a slate, of the best quality and made strong by a band of iron over the corners fastened with screws. Behind the teacher and in full view of the whole school, and accessible to the reciting classes is a black board 9 feet long by 4½ wide, with a trough at the bottom to receive the chalk or crayon, a sponge or soft leather. Over the black board, are the printed and written alphabet, arithmetical and geometrical figures, the pauses, &c., for copying or general exercise. Along the edge of the black board, the length of an inch, foot, yard, rod, &c., are designated. Over the teacher's platform, on the ceiling, the cardinal points of the compass are to be painted. In a case (c) 4 ft. wide, 15 inches deep, and 7 feet high, in the rear of the room there is a terrestrial and celestial globe, an orrery, a set of geometrical solids, a set of alphabetical and drawing cards, arithmetical blocks, and a numerical frame, a model to illustrate cube root, a set of outline maps and historical charts, a moveable stand to support maps, diagrams, moveable black boards, &c. On the western wall, on each side of the window are the eastern and western hemispheres, each six feet in diameter. There are also maps of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and the United States, and Catherwood's plan of Jerusalem, together with maps illustrative of the history of the bible. An eight day clock is also provided.

Library. The library case (e) is of the same size as the apparatus closet, and contains already nearly 400 volumes. Among them are the following books for the use of the teacher. The school Journals of Massachusetts and Connecticut, Abbott's Teacher, Palmer's Teacher's Manual, Dunn's School master's Manual, Davis' Teacher Taught, Dwight's Schoolmaster's Friend, Coe's and Minot's lessons in Drawing, Hints and methods for the use of Teachers, Slate and Black board Exercises, Mayo's Lessons on Objects, Gallaudett's School Dictionary, &c. &c.

The library also contains books particularly adapted to children, such as the Rollo Books, Parley's Magazine, The Youth's Friend, The Juvenile series of the Massachusetts School Library, &c. Among the books for general circulation among the older scholars and parents of the district are, The New-York District Libra-

ry, 4 series, 195 vols., The Massachusetts School Library, 25 vols.; The Christian Library, 45 vols.; and many works relating to the history and biography of Connecticut and the United States.

To preserve the schoolhouse, furniture and library of the district, the following rules and regulations have been adopted.

Rules and Regulations of the Washington District School.

The order of this school is a time and a place for every thing, and every thing in its proper time and place.

The teacher is required to be in the school room at least five minutes before the hour for opening the school in the morning, and in the afternoon, and in addition to other duties, must see that the following rules and regulations are complied with.

The scholars must scrape their feet on the scraper and wipe them on every mat they pass over on their way to the school room.

They must hang their caps, hats, overcoats, &c., on the hooks, or deposit them on the shelves appropriated to each respectively.

They must make no unnecessary noise within the walls of the building at any hour whatever.

They must keep their desks and books clean, and before leaving school, deposit all books, slates and pencils in their places.

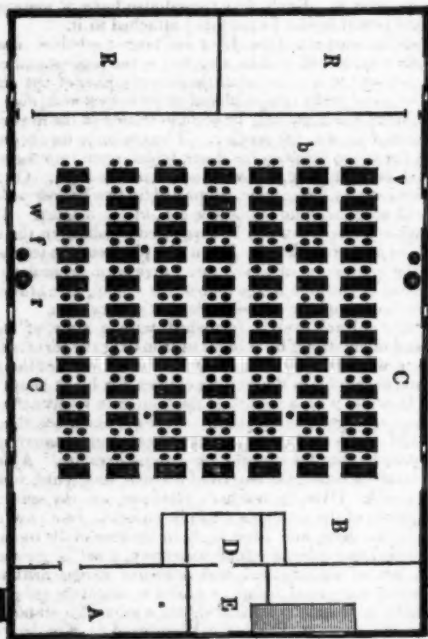
They must be held accountable for the condition of the floor nearest their own desk and seats.

They must not handle, or take any of the books, maps or apparatus belonging to the school without permission from the teacher.

They must not mark, cut, scratch, chalk or otherwise disfigure, injure or defile any portion of the schoolhouse, or any thing connected with it.

They must not play at any game in the schoolhouse before or after school hours or during the recess.

The parent or guardian, of any scholar who may in any way disfigure, injure or defile any portion of the schoolhouse, library, maps apparatus, or any thing belonging to it, shall be held responsible for the same.



Public High School Building, Middletown.

The High School building is located on Parsonage street, away from the business part of the city. The lot is 227 ft. on the street, by 200 ft. deep, and is divided into two equal parts, one of which is appropriated to the boys, and the other to the girls. The building stands near the centre of the lot, east and west, and 12 ft. from the street. The entrances are on the side next to the street.

The exterior dimensions of the building are 72 ft. by 51. It is two stories high, with a basement 9 ft. in the clear, and an arched attic, 6 ft. to the spring of the arch. The first story is occupied by the Male Department, and the second by the Girl's department. The basement will be used as a play ground for the boys in wet weather, and the attic is appropriated for calisthenic exercises for the girls, and meetings of the whole school.

The lower school room is 50 ft. by 47, and 12 ft. high in the clear, with two recitation rooms, each 25 ft. by 12. The entrance is from the east, near the end, into a lobby (A) 8 ft. wide, and fitted up with scraper, mats, hooks, &c. &c.

The desks are so placed, that the scholars face towards the teacher's platform, (D) which is against the northern partition, separating the school room from the entry. Each desk accommodates two scholars, the front of one desk constitutes the seat of the preceding one. The desks are placed in seven ranges, containing each 12 desks, each desk accommodating two scholars, and the front of one desk constituting the back of the preceding one.

The seats and desks are painted green. Each range is separated from the other by an aisle, 18 inches wide, and the whole body of desks is surrounded on three sides by an open space 6 ft. wide.

On each side of the teacher's platform there is a platform with an open space in front of 16 ft., of half the elevation, for two assistants. In the rear of the platform is a room appropriated to the teachers.

The recitation rooms are separated from the school room by a glass partition. Two sides of each is occupied by black boards.

The school rooms and recitation rooms are ventilated by openings at the top and bottom, into eight flues carried up in the wall into the space between the arch of the attic and the roof. This space communicates at all times with the open air by a grating at either end.

The school room is heated by two furnaces in the basement, the hot air ascending through the openings into the lower room, and carried into the second story and attic, by conductors.

There are six large windows to the school room, and one to each recitation room. The windows are protected by venetian blinds, which are never opened. The amount of light is graduated by the opening or closing of the slats.

The girl's room is on the second floor, and is, in every respect, like the one below. Both rooms are well supplied with black boards, and with a set of Mitchell's series of Outline Maps, and globes. Other apparatus and a library will, ere long, be provided.

Woodbury—Hotchkissville.

The school lot is one of the pleasantest in the village, and is 100 feet front, and 153 feet deep. The building stands back 100 feet from the street line. The main building is 27 feet by 37, with a projection in the rear 8 by 18 feet. There are two rooms; the front is 27 by 18 and the back 27 by 13, each 12 feet high in the clear. The entrance to the first is by a recess in front, from which there is a door into a lobby on one side for the boys, and on the other, for the girls. The teachers platform 5 feet by 8, is placed between the doors, and occupies part of the above recess. In the rear is the library case. There are four ranges of desks, each accommodating two persons, and the front of one constitutes the back of the preceding one. There is an aisle 4½ feet through the center, another 2½ feet around the room, and two 16 inches between the ranges of desks on each side of the center. There is an opening in the ceiling for ventilation, and the upper sash of the windows can be lowered if necessary, for the same object.

The entrance to the back room is in the rear, and is appropriately fitted up for a primary school. The two rooms can be thrown into one if necessary.

The district has already been presented with some maps and books, and has the promise of more.

SCHOOLHOUSE ARCHITECTURE.

This document contains a separate report of 48 pages; The first part is substantially the same as the address delivered at Windsor, in 1840, and published in the Journal, Vol. III. No. 9. It will not be published again in the Journal.

LEGAL PROVISION

Respecting the employment and education of children in factories.
See Journal, Vol. IV. 141—159.

EDUCATION AND LABOR.

See Journal, Vol. IV. 160.

COMMON SCHOOLS IN CITIES AND LARGE VILLAGES.

This document was not printed by the Legislature. It has since been printed in the New York District School Journal. Much of the information respecting the most successful school system has been published in the Journal, Vol. IV. No. 1 and 2.

NORMAL SCHOOLS OR SEMINARIES FOR THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS.

This document was not printed. Much information on this subject may be found in Volume I. 83, 85, 125, 132. II. 281, 301, 320, 334.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

This document was not printed. A brief notice of the history of school libraries may be found in Vol. III. 119.

Report of the Committee on Education.

The Joint Standing Committee on education, to whom was referred the petition of Jesse Miner and others, praying a law to be passed giving to each school district the power to appoint committees to manage their own affairs,—and the memorial of the school society of Bethlem, praying for an alteration of the twelfth section of an Act concerning common schools, so that school societies may locate and alter school districts, without regard to the number of scholars belonging thereto—also the petition of Eleazar Woodruff and others for the same object—and the petition of Cyprian Nichols and others, praying the repeal of certain sections of the Act "concerning common schools," establishing high schools, or union districts, and that taxes may be raised as formerly on the polls and ratable estate of the inhabitants of school districts; also for the repeal or revision of the eighth, ninth, the twenty-second to the twenty-seventh inclusive, and of the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sections of said act; said Committee have also had referred to them two bills for public acts, for the repeal of the twelfth section, and for that part of the law concerning common schools that provides for the pay of school visitors. These petitions and bills for public acts have received due consideration from your Committee, but it has been deemed unnecessary to make any other than a general report, as the matters therein relate to provisions of the law "concerning common schools;" and a bill for a public act is herewith presented.

The first education of our offspring was of necessity of a patriarchal character, the peculiar features of which were, that the head of every family gave to its members such instruction as his circumstances and condition in society would permit. But at an early period of our government, a system was adopted peculiarly simple (1) in itself, and well calculated to diffuse general instruction to our youth throughout the state. Of this system so early adopted, the result has been manifest. For a number of years a large proportion of the men of eminence, learning and talents, who occupied places of trust and responsibility in the states of the West, were from Connecticut, and received their first impressions, and, in many instances, were solely educated, at these primary schools. The simple system thus adopted was continued with little variation, tending to change its general features, until the session of the Legislature in 1830, when a bill was introduced by our present School Fund Commissioner, and a law was passed dividing the income from the School Fund among all the children between the ages of four and sixteen years. This law has been continued to the present time, and was, in its effects a great and radical change (3) in the whole system. The income before that period, arising from the School Fund, was divided among the several school societies upon the grand list, and great injustice (4) had been done to the remote and poorer societies or school districts. The just and equitable mode of distributing that fund, upon the principles of the law of 1830, and that for the appointment (5) of school visitors, and the examination of teachers, passed some years before, and of other provisions to carry the same into effect, stimulated the parents and children of school districts, and our schools have been mainly indebted to those salutary changes for the high standing they now attain. (6) The practice under these laws in most districts, particularly in the country towns, was to make teachers of the sons and daughters of farmers, and other working portions of the community, and place them over these institutions (7) nor was their competency and success for a number of years questioned, (8) until the spirit of trade and traffic, engendered and stimulated by the facility afforded by our moneyed institutions, drove most of our young men who had been engaged in teaching, into other, and it is believed, less laudable pursuits. (9) The thirst for speculation and trade, prior to 1838, had raised the price of teachers in a ratio disproportioned to the services rendered; and but few teachers from that portion of the community were employed; and at the time of the disposition of the deposit fund, early in 1837, a strong sentiment prevailed, that our common schools were deteriorating, and doubts existed whether the large semi-annual receipts from that fund (10) were promotive of the interest of these schools. It will be admitted, that from 1820 to 1838, (11) a period of eighteen years, but little attention was paid in most schools to other branches than orthography, reading, writing, and arithmetic, and, in the minds of your Committee, those branches were taught with a success that has not since been surpassed. (12)

To form the basis, and to make a lasting impression upon the mind of a child, those branches ought to be taught which may the most readily be brought into action, and enter into our business concerns. Hence, those of reading, writing and arithmetic, enter into our daily avocations in life, and when once fully learned, are rarely forgotten; those of English grammar and geography are next in importance, and are the only studies, (13) in connection with the fundamental branches, that ought, in our opinion, to be taught in our common schools. A good knowledge of English grammar, of history, and of the higher branches of mathematics, are seldom attained (14) in our common schools, particularly among our male children, (15) who from the age of ten or twelve years, rarely attend any but a winter school of three or four months in a year; and it is extremely doubtful whether branches of education of a higher order, tending to qualify our youth for

admission into higher seminaries of learning, would be politic, (16) or would come within what is believed to have been the intent of the founders of the school fund, (17) and of those who were promotive of its having been secured to us by the Constitution, for the benefit of the whole people of this state, to be applied solely to the object of common schools. Hence the propriety or expediency of creating by law schools of a higher order, as is provided by those sections of the law, (18) relating to union districts, is doubtful. That such schools may be formed in some societies to advantage, will not be denied; but a general law for that object, (19) may also be dangerous. The remedy in such cases can be supplied by associations, or by acts of incorporation. (20)

The idea before alluded to, that our means for the support of common schools are already adequate and abundant for the object, (21) ought not for a moment to be entertained; or that a tax upon the parents of those who attend these schools, would make them more vigilant and attentive to the education of their children, has not been demonstrated by facts (22). On the contrary, a large proportion of our schools are kept with a view to the amount of public money to be drawn from the treasury; (23) and so repugnant are their feelings, that rarely ever is a tax raised for schooling (24). That one dollar and forty cents for a child for a year's schooling, is sufficient, is not believed. (25) If the view that some entertain is tenable, a law ought to be passed to prevent the further increase of the school fund (26). Yet had not this feeling to a considerable extent prevailed, at the time of the disposition of the deposit fund, and a spirit of enterprise, bordering on prodigality, almost to the neglect of our common schools, been apparent. The entire sum left on deposit with this state, which is in reality a gift, or donation of that amount, would, in our opinion, have been made a part of our school fund, and have been placed under the charge of the present efficient manager of that fund. We are happy, however, to learn, that a large proportion (27) of the towns appropriate the annual income of that fund for the use of schools, and we could not give countenance to any provision by law to take from that fund any portion thereof for the pay of school visitors; that the duty of school visitors without pay, will be as satisfactorily performed, (28) we have no doubt.

In 1838, a Board of Commissioners of Common Schools was established, with great unanimity, and a disposition, it is believed, generally prevailed, to give the subject a fair trial, and to carry out, as far as practicable, the policy of the Board, with the hope that some vital change would be made, and a more lively interest taken upon the subject of common school education. The Secretary to that Board has prosecuted with zeal and energy the duties assigned him for four years past, and collected and diffused a fund of information throughout the school societies and districts in this state. That his labors and services have not been crowned with complete success, cannot be attributed to a want of faithfulness and attention to the subject. It could not have been expected that among the diversified opinions, (and it is a subject upon which all have their peculiar opinions) all would be satisfied. A mass of statistical information, derived from our school societies, associations of gentlemen, and from other states, has been annually printed and spread before the people; yet it is doubtful whether even the anticipations of its friends have been realized. (30) Certain it is, that frequent enactments have been made since that period, making our school laws perplexing, (31) and not readily understood, when our whole school laws in 1841 were revised and printed in a pamphlet form. (32) The expense, also, attending the duties of the Secretary of the Board, has been a source (33) of serious complaint. The expense incurred by the Board, including the compensation to the Secretary, as by the Report of the Commissioners for the four years past, is \$5,816 31, to which must be added, for printing and distributing Common School Journal and other documents, (34) \$508 40, making the sum of \$6,324 71: to which sum may be added, by estimation, to pay the school visitors, allowing only (35) two visitors, and their services two days each in a year for each district, there being 1640 districts, the sum of \$6,560, making for the two years this law has been in force, the sum of \$13,120. (36) This last sum is paid from the Deposit fund, or other funds of the society. The annual contingent expenses for printing for this department we have not the means of accurately ascertaining, but believe it will amount to more than \$1,000 for the last four years. (37) The aggregate of these sums, drawn from the Treasury and the Deposit fund, since the adoption of the Board of Commissioners in 1838, a part of which is estimated, will amount to the sum of \$20,444 71. (38) On this view of the subject, the Committee were unanimous (39) in the opinion that certain sections of the law "concerning common schools," ought to be repealed, and therefore submit the following bill for a public act.

All which is respectfully submitted.

Per order of the Committee,

O. L. SHELDON, Chairman.

The above report is printed with all its errors of grammar and logic as it appears among the legislative documents of 1842. We intended to have appended a few brief remarks on some of the statements made by the committee, but we are willing to leave the subject by referring the reader to the following index for information respecting the past and present condition of the common schools of this state, and the prospect of common school education throughout the world.—Ed.

GENERAL INDEX TO VOLUMES I. II. III. & IV.

- Abate**ments of school taxes of indigent, children provided for in Act of 1839, ii. 28; of 1841, iii. 437, 228; unequally borne under the system of quarter or rate bills in cities, iv. 5, 9.
- Abbott's Teacher**, recommended iii. 48; extracts from, i. 39; ii. 48, 197; iii. 23, 37.
- Abbott, G. D.** on a national school library, i. 48.
- Abbreviations**, how taught by slate and black board iv. 34, 121.
- Abington, S. S.** condition of school in, i. 163; ii. 222; iii. 196; iv. 52.
- Abstract of school Returns**, for Connecticut, in 1837, i. 3; in 1838-9, i. 191; in 1839-40, ii. 220; in 1840-41, iii. 177; in 1841-42, iv. 188. See *Maine, Massachusetts, Penn., Ohio, New York.*
- Act concerning common schools of 1839** ii. 26; of 1841, iii. 217; of 1842, iv. 195.
- Address to the people of Connecticut**, i. 7; to a French public school i. 114; of the Secretary of Board, respecting Con. Common School Journal, ii. 5.
- Adults**, school for, ii. 131, 271.
- Academies**, patronized by the State, in New York, i. 80; in Penn. ii. 195; teachers' department in. i. 91; ii. 172 iii. 131, 134.
- African schools**, in Boston, iv. 14; in Portland, iv. 16; in Worcester, iv. 66.
- Agrarianism**, the consequence of a separation of society into classes, iv. 12.
- Agriculture**, principles of should be taught in common schools, ii. 11; school for, in Ireland, ii. 260; in Württemberg, ii. 325.
- Aids to mental development**, i. 23.
- Air**, see *ventilation.*
- Alcott, Dr. W. A.**, essay on schoolhouses, iii. 119; contributions by, ii. 57, 71, 86, 106, 123, 134; iii. 19, 37, 59, 60; slate and black board exercises, iv. 69.
- Alphabet**, analysis of, for drawing, iv. 125; mode of teaching in Prussian schools, i. 134; in Holland, ii. 279; in Infant Model School, London, ii. 268; in model Infant School of Glasgow, ii. 255; in Sessional School, Edinburgh, ii. 251; recommended in Dunn's Manual, ii. 16; in Mother's Primer, iii. 42; by means of the black board and slate iv. 33, 75.
- American Institute of Instruction**, ii. 13, 14, 30, 35.
- American Sunday School Union**, school library of, iii. 123.
- American Education**, by B. O. Peers, i. 23; ii. 100.
- Amusements of the working classes**, increased by education, ii. 81; to be provided for, iv. 29; of children, ii. 97; of a manufacturing population, iv. 157.
- Amsterdam**, schools in, ii. 282, 286.
- Analysis and synthesis**, compared, ii. 73; deficiency in regard to the power of in Duke of Marlborough and Cromwell, ii. 73.
- Andover**, schools in, i. 189.
- Andover, Mass.**, teachers' seminary at, i. 97.
- Annals of Education**, recommended, iv. 39.
- Apparatus for schools** recommended, i. 170; ii. 207; iii. 61, 117, 251; catalogue of, prepared by Prof. Haskell, iii. 127; N. B. Chamberlain, Boston, iii. 124.
- Apprentices**, schools for recommended, i. 160; iv. 24; established in Worcester, iv. 67.
- Apptness to teach**, iii. 149.
- Aristotle's criterion of an honest government**, i. 150.
- Ashley, Lord**, labors of in behalf of factory children iv. 146.
- Associations**, county, for improvement of common schools i. 24, 32, 43, 51; town do. i. 51, 136; teachers, i. 48, 53; in Essex county, Mass., ii. 43; recommended, ii. 70; iii. 38, 249; of females and mothers, in Kensington, iii. 54; iv. 64, 189.
- Associations**, early, strength of, i. 20.
- Attendance**, punctuality of, i. 164; ii. 151; late and irregular, ii. 162, 201; iii. 217, 152; iv. 137.
- Arithmetic**, mode of teaching pursued in schools of Prussia, i. 127; recommended by Dunn, ii. 31; by a teacher in the schools in New York City, ii. 93; in Mr. Lovell's school, New Haven, ii. 224; in schools of Holland, ii. 284; in Teacher taught, iii. 67; in Theory of Teaching, iv. 48; in Palmer's Manual, iv. 49; in slate and black board exercises, iv. 98.
- Austria**, school system of, ii. 312.
- Austrian dominions in Italy**, schools in, ii. 315.
- Assessors**, when to be called out, iii. 221, 439.
- Atmosphere**, lesson on, i. 38; components of, iii. 110.
- Avon**, school in, i. 89; ii. 22; iii. 176.
- Arts**, school of, at Edinburgh, ii. 258; at Berlin, ii. 308.
- Austin, Mrs.**, translator of Cousin's Report i. 53; on National Education, iii. 101, 334.
- Bache, A. D.** Report on education in Europe, ii. 277; extracts from, ii. 253, 254, &c.; iii. 101; report on Central High School, Philadelphia, iii. 163; on High School for girls, iii. 163; on public schools in Lancaster, Pa. iii. 164.
- Bacon, Rev. Leonard**, circular by, i. 74; on labor, ii. 191.
- Backs of seats**, iii. 115.
- Baden, Grand Duchy of**, school system of, ii. 311.
- Barkhamsted**, schools in, i. 190.
- Barnard, Hon. D. D.**, report by, on school libraries, ii. 196; iii. 119.
- Barnard, H.**, Secretary of Board of Commissioners for Common Schools i. 6. Editor of the Conn. Common School Journal, i. 1. Member of Board of Commissioners, i. 6. Circular to school visitors, i. 9. Circular to vice-presidents of county associations, i. 33. First annual report, i. 155; second annual report, ii. 199; third annual report, iii. 242; fourth annual report, iv. 173. Report of, on schools of Hartford, iv. 5. Lecture at New Haven, iv. 23. Report on education of children in factories, iv. 141. Address on school-house architecture, iii. 108.
- Barre, Mass.**, Normal School at, iii. 140.
- Bartlett, H.**, on value of education to labor, iv. 162.
- Bartlett, Dr.**, on the health of Lowell, iv. 158.
- Basle**, canton of, ii. 321.
- Batavian Republic**, school law of, ii. 290.
- Bavaria**, school system of, ii. 325.
- Beattie, Dr.**, mode of teaching natural theology, iv. 36.
- Beauty**, the sense of, ii. 41; Mrs. Sigourney's essay on, ii. 117.
- Beecher's Miss Catharine**, Moral Instructor, i. 146; iii. 71.
- Beers, Seth P.**, commissioner of common schools, i. 6; author of resolution in 1837, iii. 9; increase of school fund under, iii. 227.
- Bell, Dr.** extract from, iii. 3.
- Belgium**, schools in, ii. 99, 336.
- Berlin, First, or Kensington**, schools in, i. 176; i. 241; female association in, iii. 54; iv. 64.
- Berlin, Prussia**, schools in, ii. 295, 298, 309.
- Bethany**, schools in, i. 189.
- Bethlem**, schools in, i. 190.
- Beuggen**, normal school at, ii. 323.
- Bible**, daily use of in schools, i. 7, 13, 15, 137; iii. 70.
- Bingham, Caleb**, library founded by, ii. 68; letter of, ii. 68; tribute to, ii. 68.
- Biography**, how taught by black board, iv. 108.
- Bissell, Judge**, remarks by, i. 47.
- Black board**, how made, iv. 51; exercises on, iv. 63; uses of, iv. 48, 161.
- Blacksmith**, the learned, letter from i. 41.
- Blind**, schools for, ii. 205.
- Board of Commissioners for common schools**, Act concerning, i. 5; members of for 1838, i. 6; for 1839, ii. 5; for 1840, iii. 9; for 1841, iv. 173. First annual report of, i. 153; second do. ii. 197; third do. iii. 241; fourth do. iv. 173. Expenses of, letter respecting, iii. 221; results of their appointment, iii. 229; iv. 288.
- Boarding round**, ii. 50; iii. 249.
- Bogg, Gov.**, message of, iii. 172.
- Bonn, Prussia**, public schools of, ii. 306.
- Books for teachers**, iii. 48, 107; iv. 29.
- Book-keeping**, how taught, ii. 95, 113, 141; iv. 119.
- Books**, value of, i. 96; ii. 129, 131.
- Books**, school, (see school books).
- Borough, Road School**, day at, i. 100; ii. 268.
- Boston**, school system of, ii. 36; iii. 155, 156, 172; iv. 14.
- Branford**, schools in, i. 189.
- Brattleboro' Vt.**, school system of, iv. 18.
- Bridgewater**, schools in, i. 190.
- Bridgeport**, city of, schools in. i. 187; iii. 177; iv. 21.
- Brigham, Dr.**, on Education as connected with insanity, iv. 171.
- British Foreign School Society**, ii. 269; i. 42.
- Brookfield**, schools in, i. 190.
- Brooks, Rev. Charles**, on school system of Holland, i. 41.
- Brooklyn**, schools in, i. 189.
- Brougham, Lord**, on normal schools, i. 89; tribute to Fellenberg, i. 89; on infant schools, ii. 275.
- Brühl, teacher's seminary at**, ii. 307.
- Buffalo**, school system of, iii. 138; iv. 18.
- Bumstead, J. F.**, iv. 84, 28, 93.
- Burgher schools**, i. 123; ii. 277, 295, 296, 328.
- Bushnell, Rev. Horace**, extracts from a

- discourse by, ii. 102; report on spelling books, iii. 74; on schools of Hartford, iv. 7.
- Butler, Hon. Benjamin F., remarks on school libraries, i. 149.
- Calcutta, Black hole of, iii. 113.
- Campbell, Gov., extracts from message of, ii. 131.
- Canaan, schools in, i. 188.
- Canterbury, schools in, i. 182; iii. 51; school house in, iii. 52.
- Canton, schools in, i. 189.
- Carlyle, Thomas, on national education, iii. 376.
- Carter, J. G. lecture by, iii. 69.
- Catholic children, in Hartford, iii. 27; in Lowell, Mass., iii. 156.
- Central Society of Education, England, ii. 133, 261.
- Certificate of school visitors, iii. 219.
- Chamberlain, N. B., catalogue of apparatus by, iii. 124.
- Channing, Dr., on education of teachers, i. 21; on self culture, iii. 40, 81.
- Chapin, Rev. Dr., report of, ii. 145.
- Charleston, S. C., high school in, iii. 171.
- Charlestown, Mass. schools in, iii. 158; iv. 15.
- Chatham, schools in, i. 181.
- Cheerfulness, promoted by music, iv. 53.
- Cheshire, schools in, i. 189.
- Chest, how injured, ii. 87.
- Children, should be comfortable in school, ii. 30; out of school, ii. 93.
- Children in manufacturing establishments, (*see factories*)
- Children, young, length of session for, iii. 120, 128.
- Chinese education, ii. 105.
- Christian Library, catalogue of, iii. 123.
- Christianity in common schools, i. 102.
- Church, Judge, Commissioner for common schools, i. 5; iv. 173; efforts in Salisbury, ii. 67; remarks at Danbury, ii. 84; on schools in Salisbury, iii. 195; at Litchfield county convention, i. 22.
- Churches and schoolhouses, i. 70.
- Chyleification, lesson in, ii. 59.
- Cyminification, lesson in, ii. 2.
- Cincinnati, school system of, i. 119; iii. 167; iv. 17; rules and regulations respecting, i. 60.
- Cities, common schools in, i. 165; iii. 135; iv. 5, 23; moral and educational wants in, iv. 23, 24; course of instruction different, ii. 87.
- Civilization, American, iii. 175.
- Classification of scholars, ii. 48, 147, 207; iii. 41, 101.
- Clergy and common schools, ii. 174, 178.
- Clerk of school district, powers of, iii. 219; of school society, iii. 219.
- Cleveland, Ohio, schools in, iii. 166.
- Cleanliness in schoolhouses, of children, ii. 124.
- Clinton, DeWitt, extract from, i. 61.
- Clinton, schools in, iii. 200.
- Coates, Herman, account of Burrough Road school by, ii. 269.
- Clocks in schoolhouses, iii. 16.
- Colchester, schools in, i. 189.
- Colebrook, schools in, i. 188; iii. 181.
- Colleges, influence of, on common schools, ii. 178, 215; in Penn., ii. 195.
- College graduates not necessarily educated, ii. 102.
- Collector of district, iii. 219.
- Colored children, schools for, i. 156; iv. 23, 67. (*see African schools.*)
- Colquhoun, extract from speech by, on education in Scotland, ii. 250.
- Columbia, schools in, i. 189.
- Combe, Dr., quoted, iii. 111.
- Combe, Mr. George, respecting education in U. S., iii. 172.
- Committee, School, faithful, iii. 86; of district, powers of, iii. 218; of society, powers of, iii. 219.
- Common education should be the best education, ii. 153; should be practical i. 113.
- Common schools in Connecticut, history of, i. 2; iii. 225; condition of in 1837, i. 3; in 1838, i. 187; in 1839, ii. 219; in 1840, iii. 177; in 1841, iv. 173. in Mass., (*see Mass., N. Y., Maine, &c.*)
- Common Schools, causes which have diminished the interest in, i. 51; ii. 213; iii. 243; iv. 176; tribute to, ii. 164; effects of private schools on, ii. 79, 152, 159, 161; iii. 83, 146, 168, 152; iv. 9; education in, better than in private, iv. 13; results of, iv. 13.
- Common School Conventions, i. 17—45; ii. 20, 35.
- Common School Journal, edited by H. Mann, i. 43; prospectus of, 43; extracts from, i. 51, 56; ii. 15, 30, 75, 77, 78, 92, 109; iii. 119, 179, 187; iv. 46, 57, 81, 102.
- Common School Journal, (*see School Journals.*)
- Common School Library, (*see School Library.*)
- Compass, points of, how to teach, iv. 45.
- Comparison, faculty of, cultivated by the study of geography, iv. 44; by geometry, 52.
- Composition, exercises in, i. 139; how taught, iv. 57; of short sentences, iv. 57; by framing words into sentences iv. 58; by journal writing, iv. 58; by letter writing iv. 59; how taught on black board, iv. 91.
- Compulsory system of education, i. 122 157; ii. 294; iv. 27, 28, 152.
- Confessions of a School Master, notices of, ii. 63; extracts from, ii. 63, 76, 93, 142.
- Connecticut, first civil constitution of, ii. 99; true policy of, ii. 103; peculiar advantages of, in respect to, i. 50; elevation of by good schools, i. 67.
- Connecticut Common School Journal, origin of, i. 1; resolution of General Assembly respecting, iii. 24; expenses of, to Mr. Barnard, iii. 234.
- Connecticut State Lyceum, i. 152; ii. 83, 177.
- Connecticut State Convention, ii. 20, 35.
- Co-operation of parents, (*see parents.*)
- Conscience, ii. 144.
- Conservatism, true spirit of, iv. 12.
- Convention, (*see common school convention.*) National call for, ii. 20.
- Conversation, how taught, iv. 56; ii. 41; between two teachers, ii. 79.
- Cornwall, i. 190; ii. 121; iii. 77.
- Counters or blocks in arithmetic, how to make and use, iv. 48.
- County Superintendents, (*see superintendents.*)
- Courtesy, lecture on, iii. 56.
- Cousin, M., report by, on schools of Prussia, i. 120, 129; on schools in Holland, ii. 285; on children in factories, iv. 152; comparison by, of the school systems of Prussia and Holland, ii. 292.
- Coventry, schools in, i. 180; ii. 229; iii. 204.
- Crayons, how to make, i. 70; iv. 51.
- Crime and ignorance, ii. 134, 189, 273, 335; and education, iv. 171.
- Cunningham, Prof., editor of Educator, ii. 19; iv. 30; account by, of Glasgow Normal school, iv. 29.
- Cuvier, Baron, report by, on schools of Holland, ii. 282.
- Daily progress in knowledge, i. 110.
- Danbury, schools in, i. 190; ii. 221; iii. 202; school meeting in, ii. 84; village of, schools in, ii. 23.
- Davis' Teacher Taught, notice of, iii. 53; extracts from, on classification or order of exercises, iii. 41; on penmanship, 45; on arithmetic, 67; on moral education, 70.
- Deaf and dumb, school for, ii. 205.
- Defects in common schools, iii. 34.
- Defining, method of teaching, iii. 43; how taught by black board, iv. 48.
- Denmark, school system of, iii. 332; iv. 26.
- Denzer's rule respecting rewards and punishments, ii. 46.
- Deposit Fund, (*see town deposit.*)
- Desks in schoolhouses, i. 144; iii. 115.
- Dinter, School Counsellor, noble sentiment of, ii. 61; ii. 105.
- Dick, Dr., on education and war, ii. 191.
- Dictation, spelling taught by, iv. 33.
- Discipline in schools, ii. 107.
- Didactic, or art of teaching, i. 132; ii. 16.
- Disputes about school matters, ii. 154.
- Distribution of school money, i. 161; ii. 212; iii. 83, 235.
- Districts, (*see school districts.*)
- District Committee, duties of, iii. 219; how they can improve winter schools, ii. 54, 185.
- District school libraries, (*see school libraries.*)
- District school as it was, notice of, ii. 59; extracts from, on the old school-house, ii. 59; on first summer at school, 61; first winter in school, 61; fine specimen of female teacher; how they used to read, 75; to spell, 75; to write, 94.
- District system, modified for cities, ii. 218; iii. 252.
- Dix, Gen. John A., Report on school system of N. York, i. 75; upon education of teachers, 91; extracts from report by, ii. 98.
- Doane, Bishop, on the education of the poor, ii. 152.
- Domestic instruction, ii. 80; iii. 174.
- Drawing in schools, i. 23, 35; method of teaching in Prussian schools, ii. 301; how taught iv. 39; in model schools, Ireland, 39; in European schools, 40; in Mass., 40, 116; reasons for introducing in common schools, 63; how taught in Female Seminary, Wethersfield, 117; instruction in primary schools, Boston, 119; in school at Ealing, ii. 264.
- Dublin, national model school in, iv. 35, 40, 43; hospital, mortality in, iii. 111.
- Dunn's Schoolmaster's Manual, notice of, ii. 15; extracts from, on the conditions of happiness in teaching, 15; on teaching the alphabet, spelling, reading, 16; on arithmetic, grammar, and geography, 31; on punishment, 45; on Pestalozzi, Fellenberg, and Jacotot, 106.
- Dupin, Baron, Report of, relative to the labor of children in factories, iv. 149.
- Duppa, B. F. i. 89; on schools at Ealing, ii. 264.
- Dutch and German schools, notice of, iv. 29; extracts from, 32, 40, 52.
- Duties of Parents and Teachers, lecture on, by D. P. Page, ii. 14, 34, 41.
- Dwight, Dr. extract from, ii. 15.
- Dwight, Edmund, donation of \$10,000 by, i. 96.
- Dwight, T. Jr., Schoolmaster's Friend, ii. 110, 113; extracts from, on reading, ii. 110; on geography, 112; on teachers duties before and out of school, iv. 30; on teaching music, iv. 50; extract from lecture by, i. 37.
- Ealing, industrial school, ii. 263.
- Early associations, i. 21.
- East Haddam, schools in, i. 190; iii. 188.

- East Hampton, iii. 200.
 East Lyme, iii. 201.
 East Hartford, i. 189.
 East Windsor, i. 189; iii. 208.
 Edgeworth, Maria, extract from, i. 53.
 Edinburgh, Sessional school of, ii. 251; school of arts, ii. 238.
 Educated men, responsibility of, ii. 103; not necessarily college graduates, 102.
 Education, a business for life, ii. 55; lecture on, by Horace Mann, iii. 96; what constitutes, i. 23; ii. 39; iii. 133; cheaper than ignorance, ii. 189; people's own work, i. 10; not confined to the schoolhouse, i. 23; recent publications on, i. 22; periodicals devoted to, iii. 29; of teachers, i. 21, 69; ii. 65; science of, ii. 88; history of, ii. 88; importance to happiness, 187; to usefulness, 188.
 Education, Joint Standing Committee on, report by, on expenses of the Board, iii. 221; report by, iv. 192.
 Education for the People, by Mrs. Tuckfield, notice of, ii. 96, extracts from, on oral instruction, ii. 96, 114, on composition, iv. 57.
 Education and crime, iv. 160.
 Education and insanity, iv. 169.
 Education and labor, iv. 171.
 Egypt, school system of, ii. 332.
 Ellington, schools in, i. 189; iii. 184; High school of, iv. 191.
 Elliptical, method of teaching, ii. 255.
 Ellsworth, Gov., extract from annual message, ii. 5; annual report of Board by, iv. 173.
 Emerson, G. B., on Normal School at Lexington, iii. 143.
 Emerson, Frederick, on the school system of Boston, ii. 36.
 Emerson, Rev. Joseph, prospectus of, noticed, iv. 74.
 Enfield, schools in, i. 189.
 England, education in, ii. 262-376; address to workmen on national education, ii. 117.
 English language, petition of, ii. 12.
 Essex County Teachers' Association, ii. 43.
 Europe, education in, ii. 218-336.
 Evening schools, in Louisville, Ky., iv. 24; recommended for cities, iv. 24; at the Hague, ii. 285.
 Everett, Gov., notice of address by, at Lexington, ii. 99; extracts from, iii. 72.
 Examination of schools, i. 103, 159; iii. 29, 153; last do., iii. 81; hymn for, iv. 63.
 Examination of teachers, (see teachers.)
 Exchange Lyceum, iv. 68.
 Exercise, effects of on the disposition, iii. 72.
 Exercises on the Slate and Black board, iv. 69; in drawing, iv. 125.
 Expenditure for schools in different cities, iv. 14; in different States, ii. 213.
 Eyesight, danger to, avoided, iii. 110.
 Facher system, ii. 306.
 Factories, ventilation of, iii. 113; children in, legal provision respecting, iv. 141; in Conn., 141; in Mass., 143; in R. Island, 142; in England, 142; in Prussia, 147; in Switzerland, 148; in Austria, 149; in Russia, 149; in France, 149.
 Factory schools, ii. 250, 271.
 Fairfield, schools in, i. 190.
 Family, ignorant, picture of, iii. 103; reading, 80; discipline, i. 62.
 Farmington, schools in, i. 98, 178, 198; ii. 224; iii. 42, 209; example of school improvement, iv. 193.
 Father, the duties of, iii. 103.
 Feet, resting place for, iii. 115.
 Fellenberg, i. 13; ii. 106; establishment of, at Hofwyl, ii. 321; services of, to education, iv. 29.
 Female education, i. 119, 167; ii. 195.
 Female teachers, for common schools, i. 9, 17, 34, 49, 104, 105, 167; ii. 15, 53, 61, 155, 158, 168, 206; iii. 148, 249; iv. 135, 140.
 Field, Dr., letter from, i. 73, 193; meetings by, in Middlesex Co., ii. 49; in Haddam, 49.
 Fires and fire places, ii. 43; iii. 59.
 Fireside education, extract from, i. 23; ii. 144.
 Fisk, Dr. member of Board, i. 6; extract from, i. 13.
 Floors in schoolhouses, iii. 113.
 Flowers, cultivation of, ii. 118.
 Foreigners, children of, how to be educated, ii. 132.
 Foster on popular ignorance, extract from, iii. 103.
 France, educational periodicals, i. 11; primary schools in, i. 98; ii. 333; infant schools in, i. 12, ii. 50; history of public instruction in, iii. 333; Normal schools in, i. 98; ii. 334; ignorance and crime in, ii. 335.
 Franke foundation at Halle, ii. 300.
 Franke, founder of Normal school, i. 83; ii. 81.
 Franklin fire-place, or stove, iii. 113.
 Free, public schools should be made, iv. 7, 11.
 Freedom, in what it consists, iv. 151.
 Frost's Early Exercises in Composition, iv. 59.
 Fuel, provision for, iii. 113; provided for in act of 1841, 115; iii. 219.
 Fund, (see school fund.)
 Furnaces for schools, recommended, i. 144, 146; iii. 114.
 Gallaudet, Rev. T. H., articles by, on female teachers for common schools, i. 8, 17, 34, 49, 103, 106; on teachers' seminary, 81; on co-operation of parents, ii. 7, 29, 35, 38, 58, 71, 86; spelling book by, iii. 74.
 Gallery for small children, in Glasgow schools, ii. 255; plan of, iii. 116; for pictures, recommended for cities, iv. 25.
 Geneva, N. Y., school system, iii. 150; iv. 18.
 Geography, modes of teaching, in Borough road school, ii. 270; in Prussian schools, ii. 297, 300; in model school, Dublin, iv. 42; by outline maps, iv. 40, 43, 45; in schools of Holland, ii. 184, 279; in the Glasgow model schools, ii. 256; recommended by J. G. Carter, iii. 68; recommended by Dunn, ii. 32 recommended by Dr. Alcott, iv. 103.
 Geometry, iv. 53; early lessons in, 74.
 Gerardo, Baron de, on the education of factory children, iv. 153.
 Gilead, schools in, i. 189.
 Glasgow, educational society, schools of, ii. 254; high school of, ii. 253.
 Glastenbury, schools in, i. 179, 189.
 Globes, how to make, i. 43; iv. 46; directions for the use of, iv. 47.
 Goshen, schools in, i. 188; iii. 32; ii. 221.
 Government of schools, i. 102, 109; ii. 158; iv. 140.
 Graduation of schools, i. 117, 119; ii. 36, 37, 121, 159, 217; iii. 13, 85, 92, 101, 251; iv. 6, 10, 24, 182.
 Grammar, mode of teaching, in Glasgow schools, ii. 256; in sessional school, Edinburgh, ii. 253; in Borough road school, ii. 69; in Lancasterian school, N. Haven, ii. 236; in model school, Dublin, iv. 55; recommended by Dunn, ii. 31; recommended by Dr. Alcott, iv. 112.
 Grammar schools, iv. 14, 15, 16.
 Gravitation, school lesson on, i. 35.
 Greatness, true, in what it consists, ii. 40.
 Greenville, village, schoolhouse in, i. 193; schools in, iii. 32; ii. 239.
 Greenwich, schools in, i. 190.
 Griswold, schools in, i. 184, 169.
 Groton, schools in, i. 189.
 Grotte del Carne, iii. 60, 110.
 Querry, on the moral statistics of France, ii. 335; refuted by G. R. Porter, ii. 336.
 iv. 59.
 Guilford, schools in, i. 190, 194.
 Guizot, M., report on the school law of France, i. 99; remarks on, ii. 333; extract from circular of, iii. 101.
 Habits, how formed, ii. 11.
 Haddam, schools in, i. 185; ii. 230; iii. 186; meeting of all the schools in, ii. 49.
 Hadlyme, schools in, i. 185, 190; ii. 222.
 Hall's lectures on school teaching, iii. 256.
 Hamden, schools in, i. 186; ii. 222; iii. 185.
 Hampton, schools in, i. 182, 189.
 Hannegan, Gov., message of, iii. 170.
 Happiness depends on education, ii. 187.
 Harlaem, Normal school at, i. 87; ii. 281; state of education in, ii. 282.
 Harper & Brothers, catalogue of District School Library by, iii. 192.
 Harris, N., on Book-keeping, ii. 95, 113, 411; iv. 119.
 Hart, Mr., report of, on schools of Norwalk, i. 64.
 Hart, Simon, report of, on schools of Farmington, ii. 224; iii. 49.
 Hartford County, school meetings in, i. 47, 64; ii. 65.
 Hartford, city of, condition of common schools in, iv. 5; proposed school system for, 6; Rev. Mr. Bushnell's report on, 7; center school, 7.
 Hartford, First S. S., schools in, i. 177, 189; ii. 65; iii. 26, 73, 179.
 Harwinton, schools in, i. 188, 190.
 Haskell, Prof., apparatus by, iii. 99.
 Hayes, Rev. G., letter from, ii. 147.
 Hannover, kingdom of, schools in, ii. 327.
 Health, instruction respecting, i. 114; laws of, ii. 50, 89; as effected by good and bad schoolhouses, i. 117.
 Heart, its structure, ii. 136.
 Hebrew nation, peculiarities of the result of educational influences, ii. 89.
 Hebron, schools in, i. 180, 189.
 Hesse, Grand Duchy of, schools in, ii. 312.
 Hickson, E. labors in regard to vocal music, i. 38.
 Hickson, Wm. E., on the schools of Holland and Germany, iv. 29, 32, 40, 59.
 High school, public, recommended, i. 172; ii. 159, 210; iii. 52, 63, 75, 85, 233, 252; iv. 6, 10, 24; in Boston, 14; Charlestown, 15; Lowell, 16; Providence, 17; Philadelphia, 18; Brattleborough, 18; Middletown, 19.
 Hillhouse, James, Commissioner of school fund, iii. 227.
 Hillhouse, James A., lecture by, i. 56.
 Hints, concerning small children, i. 11; ii. 182; iii. 120, 128; for teachers, iv. 29-63.
 History, i. 113; ii. 161; how taught by black board, 108; local, ii. 97.
 History and geography connected, iv. 54; and reading, 55.
 Historical Society of Connecticut, ii. 180.
 Hofwyl, schools at, ii. 321.
 Hohenheim, institute of agriculture at, ii. 325.
 Holbrook, Josiah, author of exchange lyceum system, iv. 68.
 Holland, school system of, Brooks' lecture on, i. 40; Bache's report on, ii. 277; Nichols' do., 281; Cuvier's do., 282; Cousin's do., 285.

- Historical maps, how to make, iv. 51.
 Home Education, by I. Taylor, extract from, iv. 51.
 Home school, ii. 138.
 Horner, Leonard, on the employment of children in factories, iv. 147.
 House I live in, ii. 57, 71, 86, 106, 136.
 Howe, Dr. S. G., letter from, respecting the length of school session for small children, iii. 143; respecting the normal school at Lexington, Mass., iii. 143.
 Hubbard, S. D. member of Board, i. 6; precedent of school conventions, i. 44; report on schools in Middletown, i. 63, 74.
 Humphrey, Dr., thoughts on common schools, ii. 73; outlines of a school system, 73; schoolhouses, 73; female teachers, 119; graduation of schools, 119; qualifications of teachers, 119; school government, 121; moral government, 121; laws and regulations, 123; corporeal punishments, 123; parental co-operation, 122; number of scholars in one school, 122; punctuality, 122; vacations, 122; school meetings; on family discipline, i. 62.
 Huntington, schools in, i. 193.
 Hutchins, J. T., letter from, iii. 76.
 Hyde, Rev. Mr., letter from, iii. 50.
 Ignorance and crime, ii. 133, 189; iv. 171.
 Illustration, visible, in school, ii. 127; iii. 61.
 Imagination, culture of, ii. 117.
 Impartiality in school government observed, i. 102.
 Improvement in common schools needed, i. 19; every one interested in, i. 21; beneficial to colleges, 19; to Sunday schools, 19; how effected by lawyers, 142; by physicians, ii. 149; by the clergy, ii. 175; how in Conn., ii. 216, iv. 173.
 Incidental teaching, ii. 123.
 Indigent children, tax of, abated, iii. 96, 134, 240; iv. 9; provided for in school law, sec. 37, 220.
 Industry, schools of, ii. 262-267; for pauper children at Norwood, ii. 262; at Ealing, 263; at Lindfield, 265; at Gowar's Walk, 266; at Hackney Wick, 266; at Guernsey, 267; at Warwick, 267.
 Indiana, education in, ii. 193.
 Infant school, origin of, ii. 267; at Spitalfields, 267; model of home and colonial infant school society, 268; of Glasgow educational society, 255; at Rotterdam, 268; in Lombardy, 316; Lord Brougham's remarks on, 275.
 Influence, measure of, ii. 40.
 Inkstand, mode of fixing, iii. 115.
 Innovations in teaching, ii. 39.
 Inspection of schools, in Conn., i. 158; ii. 210; iii. 218; in Mass., ii. 144, 157; in N. York, i. 76, 80; iii. 130, 133; iv. 133; in Holland, ii. 277, 285, 290; in Prussia, i. 124; ii. 291, 304.
 Instructors, (see teachers.)
 Intellectual education, iii. 39, 40; capabilities of improving in, iii. 36.
 Intermediate school in Holland, ii. 277, 287; at Hofwyl, ii. 323.
 Interest in studies and recitations, ii. 138; want of public, in schools, i. 51, 173; ii. 217; iii. 213; iv. 8, 182.
 Ireland, school system of, ii. 258.
 Interrogative, method in teaching, ii. 127, 251, 258; iii. 63.
 Itinerant schools in Norway, iv. 27; recommended in Kentucky, 136.
 Jackson, Dr., letter from, respecting length of school session, iii. 120.
 Jacotot, ii. 106.
 Journals of Education, list of, i. 11, 43; iv. 29.
 Judson, Hon. A. T., Commissioner, i. 6; iv. 173.
 Julius, Dr., on Teachers' Seminars in Prussia, i. 85.
 Justice of the peace, contrasted with school committee, ii. 30.
 Juvenile offenders, school for, at Rotterdam, ii. 233; recommended for cities, iv. 21.
 Kay, Dr., picture of the laboring classes in England by, iv. 146.
 Kensington, schools in, i. 475; ii. 241; iii. 29, 51.
 Kentucky, Annual Report of Superintendent, for 1840, iii. 169; for 1842, iv. 136.
 Killingly, schools in, i. 182, 189; ii. 222; iii. 76, 187, 192.
 Killingworth, schools in, i. 190.
 Kingsley, Prof., on the early legislation of N. Haven, respecting common schools, i. 50.
 Knnsnatch, Normal school at, ii. 320.
 Labor and education, iv. 160.
 Labor and self culture, ii. 80, 130; true nobility of 191; in aristocratic and republican countries, compared, ii. 194.
 Laborers on public work, children of, ii. 172; in manufacturing establishments, 173, 176.
 Laboring classes, elevation of, in manufacturing districts, iv. 156; in Lowell, 158; of different countries compared, iv. 167.
 Lancaster, Joseph, ii. 268; iii. 109.
 Lancaster, Pa., school system of, iii. 165; iv. 17.
 Language, method of teaching, by Mrs. Willard, iii. 31; lesson on, i. 61; ready use of, ii. 139; i. 127.
 Lansdowne, Marquis of, on the state of education in England, ii. 275.
 Lastadie, small normal school at, i. 132.
 Lebanon, schools in, i. 184, 189; ii. 239; iii. 180.
 Lectures, ii. 81, 82; iii. 254; iv. 25.
 Ledyard, schools in, i. 104, 189.
 Leghorn, commercial school at, ii. 318.
 Legislation, ennobled by noble objects, i. 62.
 Legislature, proceedings of, in 1838, i. 2, 6; in 1839, ii. 5, 6; in 1840, iii. 229; in 1841, iii. 221; in 1842, iv. 180.
 Letter writing, iv. 59.
 Lewis, Samuel, report of, i. 118; do. ii. 154; tribute to, 154.
 Lexington, Mass., normal school at, ii. 99; iii. 141.
 Leyden, Holland, schools in, ii. 287.
 Libraries, (see school libraries.)
 Liepsic, Saxony, schools in, ii. 328.
 Light in schoolhouses, i. 145; iii. 14, 110.
 Lines, how to make on slate or black board, iv. 71.
 Lisbon, schools in, i. 181, 189.
 Litchfield county schools, Convention in, i. 32; schools in, 71, 72; ii. 67.
 Litchfield, schools in, i. 188, 190; iii. 193.
 Literary men, and an educated people, i. 56.
 Litigation in school districts, ii. 114; iii. 254.
 Location of schoolhouses, i. 115; iii. 108.
 Local history, ii. 97.
 Lombardy, elementary education in, iii. 315.
 London, Bishop of, on national education, ii. 275.
 Louisville, Ky., school system of, iii. 170; iv. 18.
 Lovell, John E., account of Lancasterian school, New Haven, ii. 231.
 Lowell, Mass., school system of, iii. 56; iv. 16; factory system of, iv. 158.
 Lungs, lesson on, ii. 71, 66.
 Lyceums, i. 10, 39; ii. 81, 277; for cities, iv. 25.
 Lying, school lesson on, i. 147.
 Lyme, schools in, i. 184, 189; iii. 204.
 Magnanimity, instance of, iii. 103.
 Maine, school system of, i. 151; ii. 247; iii. 159.
 Management of schools, by R. C. Waterston, ii. 19.
 Mann, Horace, extracts from Reports by, i. 116, 143, 145; ii. 174; iii. 144; iv. 137; service to the cause of education, iii. 38.
 Manners of children, iv. 13.
 Mansfield, schools in, i. 180, 189; ii. 223, iii. 55, 181, 201.
 Manual for teachers, recommended, in Penn., ii. 193; by Dunn, (see Dunn.) by Palmer, (see Palmer's Prize Essay.) of British and Foreign School Society, extracts from, iii. 48, 64, 69.
 Manual Labor School, i. 43; ii. 262-267, 269, 308, 314.
 Manufacturing population, iv. (see index volume iv.)
 Manufacturing system, iv. (see index volume iv.)
 Map drawing, iv. 40, 77, 116.
 Marcy, Gov., message of, respecting school libraries, ii. 195; respecting normal schools, i. 96.
 Marsh, Capin, Lyon & Webb, Common School Library, ii. 174; catalogue of, iii. 121.
 Marsh, Rev. A., report by, ii. 167, 240.
 Mastication, lesson in, ii. 58.
 Massachusetts, school system of, ii. 156; school returns for 1838, i. 116; for 1839, ii. 157; for 1840, iii. 83; for 1841, iv. 136.
 Means and Ends, by Miss Sedgwick, extracts from, on what to read and how to read, ii. 12; on what constitutes education, 39; on school education, 56; on the home school, 128.
 Mechanics Institution, origin of, ii. 171; condition of at London, 272, at Manchester, 272; in Mass., 177.
 Medium schools for cities, iv. 10; in Roxbury, 15.
 Meriden, schools in, i. 190.
 Methods of instruction, hints respecting, ii. 209; iv. 29; in summer schools, ii. 189.
 Michelot, M. address by at Paris, i. 115.
 Michigan, school system of, i. 59; ii. 168; Report of Superintendent for 1838, i. 64; for 1839, ii. 169; for 1840, iii. 170; for 1841, iv. 139.
 Middletown, schools in, i. 185, 190; ii. 220; iii. 180; city, schools in, i. 63, 74; iii. 23, 180; iv. 19.
 Middlebury, schools in, i. 186, 190.
 Milford, schools in, i. 190.
 Missouri, school system of, iii. 171.
 Model school, i. 43, 104, 134; ii. 62, 268, 255.
 Monitors, (see monitorial system.)
 Monitorial system of instruction, ii. 208, 278, 285.
 Monkeys, diseases of, on account of bad air, ii. 74.
 Monroe, schools, in, i. 190.
 Montpelier, new school house in, iii. 17.
 Montville, schools in, i. 189.
 Moral education, ii. 78, 107, 121, 322; iii. 37, 70, 80; iv. 12, 122, 124.
 Morning hymn for children, iv. 62.
 Mothers, associations of, for school improvement, iv. 64.
 Motives, to be addressed, i. 68, 109; iii. 46, 62; iv. 47.
 Morton, Gov., extract from message, ii. 157.
 Mulhausen, Industrial School at, iv. 151.
 Music, in common schools of Paris, i.

- 15; ii. 10; in Switzerland, ii. 51; in the schools of Boston, iv. 61; in German schools, iii. 103; iv. 59; in Holland, ii. 230, 26; recommended, i. 32, 55, 169; ii. 90, 161; iii. 164; iv. 60, 61.
- Must have and may want, desirable things divided into, ii. 57.
- Mutual instruction, i. 141; ii. 208.
- Nantucket, school system of, iii. 157; iv. 14.
- Naples, grotto at, iii. 199.
- Nassau, Grand Duchy of, school system of, ii. 311.
- Natural History, i. 127.
- Natural Philosophy, i. 92, 127.
- Natural Theology, for children, iv. 36; a lesson in, 36.
- Neuwied, Teachers' Seminary at, ii. 307.
- New Canaan, schools in, i. 187, 190; ii. 147, 230; iii. 199.
- New Fairfield, schools in, i. 187, 190.
- New Grenada, schools in, i. 22.
- New Hartford, schools in, i. 190.
- New Haven colony, early school legislation of, i. 50.
- New Haven, schools in, i. 186, 189; ii. 116, 223, 231; iii. 54; iv. 19.
- New Jersey, school system of, iii. 168; iv. 139.
- New London, schools in, i. 183, 189; iii. 193.
- New London, city, schools in, ii. 67, 223; iii. 55, 193; iv. 20; county convention in, i. 44, 64, 120; ii. 67.
- New London county, condition of common schools in 1836, i. 4.
- New Milford, schools in, i. 190; iii. 205.
- New Preston, schools in, i. 190.
- New Salem, schools in, i. 190.
- Newtown, schools in, i. 187, 190; academy, influence of, on teachers, ii. 145.
- New York, school system of, i. 13, 75; progress of do., ii. 171; district school library system in, ii. 195; iii. 133; iv. 134; teachers department in, i. 77, 91; ii. 172; iii. 131; iv. 134; School Journal, iii. 133; iv. 134; County Superintendents in, iii. 133; iv. 133; school fund, ii. 171; iii. 130; iv. 133; tribute to, by Mr. Mann, ii. 132; by Mr. Barnard, iii. 256; by Mass. Board of Education, iv. 137; by Superintendent of Michigan, iv. 140.
- New York city, school system of, iii. 133; public school society of, 139.
- Newspapers, service of, to education, i. 10, 15.
- Nichols, G., report on laboring classes of Holland and Belgium, ii. 281.
- Night work in factories, iv. 150.
- Nitrogen, iii. 110.
- Non-attendance at school, i. 161; ii. 201.
- Norfolk, schools in, i. 190.
- Normal schools, origin and history of, i. 83. In Prussia, i. 85, 125, 129, 132; ii. 301, 305, 306. In France, i. 86; ii. 334. In Holland i. 87; ii. 281, 285. In England, i. 89; ii. 17. In Scotland, i. 90; ii. 257. In Switzerland, ii. 320, 323. In New York, i. 91. In Massachusetts, i. 96; ii. 99; iii. 141; iv. 136. Plan of, recommended by Prof. Stowe, ii. 61, 87, 103; reasons for, and against, ii. 103; iii. 212; recommended in New York, i. 95; in Conn., i. 104, 105, 174; ii. 9, 917; in Penn. ii. 194; iii. 161; iv. 135; in New Jersey, iii. 168; in Ohio, ii. 151; iii. 166; in Michigan, i. 61; ii. 169; in Kentucky, iii. 169; iv. 126; in South Carolina, iii. 171; in Philadelphia, i. 163; opinions respecting, by Dr. Channing, i. 91; by De Witt Clinton, 91; by Gov. Marcy, 95; by Lord Brougham, 99; by Rantoul, 21; by Wyse, 52; by T. H. Gallaudet, 81; by Guizot, 86; name explained, i. 98.
- North Branford, schools in, i. 190.
- North Canaan, schools in, i. 190.
- North Carolina, school system of, ii. 51.
- North, Dr. series of articles by on reading, ii. 125, 142; iii. 44, 65.
- North star, how to find, iv. 45.
- Northfield, schools in, i. 190.
- North Plainfield, ii. 223; iii. 207.
- North Stonington, schools in, i. 189.
- Norton, John T., report by, respecting schools in Farmington, i. 10; ii. 226; letter from, i. 115; report by, iii. 209; donation by, 224.
- Norwalk, schools in, i. 64, 190; village of, iv. 22; new schoolhouse in, 22.
- Norway, school system of, ii. 115; iv. 27.
- Norwich, schools in, i. 184, 189; iii. 25; city, schools in, iv. 22.
- Norwood, school of industry at, ii. 262.
- Notation of music, i. 108; iv. 60.
- Numeral frame, how to make, iv. 49.
- Numeration, lessons in, i. 41.
- Obedience to teachers, school lesson on, iii. 71.
- Oberlin, memoirs of, ii. 133, 151; founder of infant schools, ii. 151.
- Objects, sensible, ii. 81, 134; lessons on by Mayo, ii. 254.
- O'Brien, Hon. W. S., on the public schools of Ireland, ii. 261.
- Ohio, school system of, i. 118; ii. 131, 154; iii. 165; iv. 140.
- Olmsted, Prof., School Commissioner, ii. 5; Second Annual Report of Board by, 197.
- Operative child and apprenticed one, compared, iv. 154.
- Oral instruction, ii. 96, 113, 151; should precede reading, ii. 139.
- Order in school, i. 68.
- Orrery, defects of iv. 43.
- Orthography, ii. 91, (see *spelling*.)
- Outlinemaps, how made, iv. 45; Mitchell's series recommended, iv. 67.
- Oxford, schools in, i. 190.
- Oxygen, ii. 86.
- Page D. P., lectures by, ii. 14.
- Palmer, T. H., Prize Essay or Teacher's Manual by, notice of, ii. 48; extracts from, on gradation of schools, 12; on errors in physical education, 14; on the location, &c., of schoolhouses, 15; on defects and improvement in common schools, 34; on mental arithmetic, iv. 52; on drawing, 38; on morality, 124.
- Parents, duties of to teachers, ii. 14, 41; co-operation of in improving schools, ii. 7, 29, 38, 55, 61, 85, 86, 116, 122, 163; interest and influence of, iii. 153, 179, 180, 209, 213; indifference of, ii. 194; iv. 139.
- Paris, schools in, ii. 51.
- Partnership, created by universal suffrage, i. 56; ii. 214.
- Patriotism, iii. 104; female, i. 62.
- Peculiarities of character should be studied, ii. 87.
- Peers, B. O., quoted, i. 70; ii. 101.
- Pencils, slate, how preserved, iv. 71.
- Pen-holding, iv. 37; making, 38.
- Pennmanship, i. 54, 115; ii. 93, 94, 161, 182, 234, 235; iii. 45, 65, 88; iv. 36.
- Pennsylvania, school system of, ii. 18, 192; report of Superintendent for 1839, ii. 18; for 1840, 92; for 1841, iii. 161; iv. 135.
- Pens, steel, iv. 38.
- Periodicals, educational, noticed, i. 11, 43; iv. 29.
- Pestalozzi, i. 151; ii. 106.
- Philadelphia, school system of, ii. 19; iii. 162; iv. 16; high school for boys in, iii. 163, do for girls, iii. 163.
- Physical education, ii. 58, 257; iii. 14, 35, 144.
- Physicians and common schools, ii. 149.
- Physiology, study of, i. 127.
- Picturing out a lesson, ii. 254.
- Pierce, Cyrus, letter respecting Normal School at Lexington, Mass., iii. 141.
- Pierce, John D., report, as superintendent of Michigan, on schoolhouses, i. 58; on primary schools, 59; on teachers' seminaries, 65; annual report for 1839, ii. 169.
- Plans of schoolhouses, (see *schoolhouses*)
- Play ground, essential to moral and physical training, i. 91; ii. 257.
- Plymouth, schools in, i. 190.
- Pomfret, schools in, i. 189; iii. 193.
- Poor, education of in Ohio, ii. 154; in cities, iv. 24; amusements for, 24; homes of, 24.
- Popular education in England, ii. 17, 262, 376.
- Poquonock, new schoolhouse at, ii. 105.
- Porter, Gov., extract from message of, i. 80; ii. 116.
- Portersville, new schoolhouse, ii. 67.
- Portland, Me., school system of, iii. 159; iv. 16.
- Potsdam, Prussia, Normal school at, i. 129; burgher school of, ii. 301.
- Potter, Prof., report on teacher's department, New York, iii. 137.
- Practical exercises, ii. 142, 184-5.
- Praise, judicious use of in school government, i. 109.
- Prayer recommended to teachers, ii. 47.
- Presents to scholars, iii. 71.
- Press, the service of to common schools, i. 1, 48.
- Preston, schools in, i. 185, 189; ii. 222; iii. 184.
- Primary branches, too much neglected, i. 158; ii. 160, 207; first to be attended, 48.
- Primary schools, origin of, iii. 156; condition of, 146, 156; recommended for cities, iv. 6, 24.
- Primary school system of France, i. 98; ii. 333; of Prussia, i. 121; ii. 293; of Saxony, i. 327; of Holland, 277.
- Prinsen, M., director of normal schools, opinions of, i. 88.
- Prisons, size of, compared with schoolhouses, iii. 110.
- Private schools, origin of, ii. 79; influence of on common schools, i. 173; ii. 79, 152, 159, 161, 215; iii. 83, 143, 168, 252; iv. 6, 11.
- Prize Essay, (see *Palmer, T. H.*)
- Progress of society, ii. 180.
- Pronunciation, ii. 77, 92, 111, 196; iv. 32.
- Prospect, schools in, i. 190.
- Prospectus of Conn. Common School Journal, i. 1; ii. 5.
- Providence, school system of, iii. 160; iv. 16.
- Prussia, school system of, report on by Cousin, i. 122; by Prof. Stowe, 134; by President Bache, ii. 193; by Wyse, 304; history of, ii. 293; organization of, i. 122; ii. 194, 304; duty of parents under, i. 122; duty of the towns, i. 123; ii. 294; course of instruction in, i. 123, 134; ii. 295, 297, 302; training of teachers in, i. 65, 123, 125; ii. 301, 307; superintendents of, i. 124; ii. 304; condition of schools under, in 1831, i. 122; in 1838, ii. 304; difficulty of introducing into Conn., i. 120; commended by Gen. Dix, i. 121; by Cousin, i. 122; by Prof. Stowe, i. 139.
- Public meetings of schools recommended, i. 132; ii. 67; held in Salisbury, i. 194; in Haddam, ii. 49; in Kensington, 241.
- Public libraries in Mass., ii. 176.

- Public schools, public blessings, extracts from, ii. 20.
 Punctuality, ii. 123; iii. 247. (*see attendance*.)
 Punctuation, how taught, iv. 34, 121.
 Punishments, in schools, rules respecting the application of, by Dunn, ii. 45; by Denzel, 46; by Waterston, 97.
 Putnam, Rev. George, letter respecting schools in Roxbury, Mass., iii. 158.
 Qualification of teachers, prescribed in Conn., iii. 219, sec 8, 28; prescribed in Holland, ii. 282; prescribed in Prussia, i. 85, 125; ii. 307.
 Quarter or rate bill per scholar, taxation unequal, i. 161; iv. 6, 11, 189.
 Questions for the examination of teachers, i. 12; ii. 291.
 Rantoul, Robert, extract from article by, in the North American Review, i. 21; ii. 189.
 Read, what to and how, ii. 12.
 Reading, mode of teaching, in schools of Prussia, i. 135; ii. 295, 300; iv. 34; of Holland, ii. 279, 284; in Sessional school Edinburgh, ii. 251; in model school Glasgow, iv. 34; in national model school Dublin, iv. 35; in Lovell's school, New Haven, ii. 232; in Borough Road School, i. 114; iii. 63; recommended by Dunn, ii. 16; by Dr. Alcott, ii. 76; iv. 33, 95; by Dr. North, ii. 124, 140; iii. 44, 65; by Archbishop Whately, iv. 35.
 Reading books, titles of, i. 191; ii. 224.
 Reading, school in, i. 190; ii. 240.
 Real estate, when and how taxed, iii. 220, 238.
 Real schools, in Prussia, i. 301, 324; in Saxony, 331.
 Rebuke, power of, carefully exercised, i. 102.
 Recitation, place for, iii. 109.
 Reform or Rescue schools, ii. 205.
 Register, school, i. 171; ii. 161; value of, iii. 92; prescribed by law, 219-229.
 Regulations of public schools in Cincinnati, i. 60.
 Religious instruction in schools of Holland, ii. 280, 292; of Prussia, i. 135, 138; ii. 297; in Borough Road school, i. 101; in model school, Glasgow, ii. 256; hints respecting by Waterston, ii. 47.
 Remarks on the school law of Conn. from 1650 to 1841, iii. 220.
 Repeating after the teacher, iv. 32.
 Reports of school committees, ii. 162, 224; iii. 24, 25, 177.
 Rhode Island, schools in, iii. 160.
 Rich and poor, unfounded prejudices respecting each, ii. 129; removed by good public schools, iii. 159; iv. 12.
 Ridgefield, schools in, i. 187, 190.
 Robbins, Rev. R., report by, iii. 29.
 Rockwell, Charles, inquiries into common schools in New London county, i. 4; member of Board, i. 6.
 Rockwell, John A. report by, i. 4; ii. 7.
 Rotterdam, schools in, ii. 288.
 Roxbury, schools in, i. 190; iii. 191.
 Roxbury, Mass., school system of, iii. 158; iv. 15.
 Russia, school system of, ii. 330.
 Sabbath School Libraries, ii. 177, 216.
 Sabbath Schools, i. 19; ii. 270, 259.
 Salem, schools in, i. 117.
 Salisbury, schools in, i. 188, 190, 194; ii. 68, 148, 321; iii. 195.
 Saxe-Weimar, Grand Duchy of, school system of, ii. 327.
 Saxony, school system of, iii. 327.
 Saybrook, schools in, i. 190; ii. 222; iii. 190.
 Scholar, the good, iii. 102.
 Scholar's Companion, notice of, iv. 67.
 School, apparatus, (*see apparatus*.)
 School books, i. 49, 169; ii. 68, 69, 136, 160, 170, 207; iii. 91, 95, 153, 250; iv. 135, 140.
 School committee, dignity of the office, i. 12; ii. 30.
 School conventions, i. 17, 24, 32, 44, 45, 155; in Mass., ii. 173.
 School districts, law respecting, iii. 218-219; sub-division of, ii. 201; iii. 145-146; remedies for, iii. 130, 146, 219, 244; inequality of, iii. 179, 181, 187, 189; iv. 138; evils of large, i. 162; ii. 202; of too small, i. 162; ii. 202.
 School fund in Conn., origin of, iii. 26; increase under Mr. Hillhouse, 227; under Mr. Beers, 227; influence of, 229; ii. 213; iii. 231, 232; how it should be distributed, ii. 208; iii. 83, 169, 205; in New York, origin and amount of, ii. 171; iii. 130; iv. 133; in Ohio, ii. 155; in Michigan, ii. 168; in Mass., ii. 157; in Maine, ii. 213, 248; in Penn., ii. 193, 213.
 School keeping, introduction to, ii. 63.
 Schoolhouse, location of, i. 36, 144; iii. 14, 15, 108; size of, i. 36, 144; iii. 109; construction and material of, iii. 15, 108; seats and desks of, i. 14, 106, 144; iii. 15, 17, 115; warming of, i. 14, 142; iii. 14, 15, 58, 113; ventilation of, i. 36, 142; iii. 18, 59, 110; light of, i. 14, 36, 145; iii. 14, 15, 110; arrangement for teacher of, iii. 16, 110, apparatus of, iii. 117; i. 70; library of, iii. 118; yards and out buildings of, i. 146; duties of teachers to, ii. 43; of scholars to, iii. 57; of district committee to, ii. 37; iii. 55; plan of by Mr. Mann, i. 145; by Mr. Palmer, iii. 15; in New York public school, i. 106; in Michigan, i. 57; by Dr. Alcott, i. 152; in Chelsea, Mass., ii. 179; in New Haven, ii. 179; in Portersville, ii. 67; in Montpelier, Vt., iii. 17; in Windsor, Conn., iii. 105; in Lowell, Mass., iii. 156; in Charlestown, iii. 158; in Roxbury, Mass., iii. 158.
 Schoolhouses, condition of, in Conn., i. 171, 193; ii. 37, 209; iii. 104, 245; in Mass., i. 117; ii. 157, 175; iii. 86, 147; iv. 137; in New York, iii. 94; iv. 134; in Ohio, i. 110; ii. 155; iii. 166; law respecting, iii. 219, S. 16, 21.
 School Journal, established in Conn., i. 1; in Mass., i. 43; in New York, iv. 134; recommended, i. 8; ii. 172; iii. 133.
 School law of Conn., history of, iii. 225; as it was in 1838, i. 25; in 1839, ii. 21; in 1841, iii. 217; modifications of, 1842, iv. 204; relating to school societies, iii. 217; to districts, 218, to teachers, 219; to state appropriation, 219; to Board of Commissioners, 231.
 School library, origin of, iii. 119, 256; remarks respecting, i. 148, 170; ii. 114, 172, 175, 177, 194, 195, 210; iii. 26, 87, 161, 169, 250; catalogue of, iii. 109, 121, 122, 123; iv. 134, 136, 140.
 School master, (*see teacher*.)
 School officers, accountability of, should be elected for three years, iv. 140.
 School register, (*see register*.)
 School returns, first provided for in 1837, i. 3, 6; circular respecting, i. 97; ii. 149; iii. 97; for 1837-38, i. 3; for 1838-39, i. 177; for 1839-40, ii. 219; for 1840-41, iii. 177.
 School society, how constituted, i. 157; ii. 201, iii. 232; powers of, 217.
 School teachers, law respecting, iii. 219; (*see teachers*.)
 Scotland, parochial school system of, i. 89; ii. 249.
 Secondary schools, ii. 145; iv. 7, 10, 17, 24.
 Secretary of Board of Commissioners, of Common Schools, duties of, i. 67; iii. 221; expenses of, iii. 11, 221; repealed, iv. 201.
 Sedgwick, Miss., extracts from, ii. 12, 39, 56, 128; iii. 71.
 Self culture, i. 40; ii. 40, 80; time for, 81; multiplies sources of amusement, ii. 81.
 Sentence making, ii. 142, 184; iv. 93.
 Sessional school, Edinburgh, account of, ii. 251.
 Seward, Gov. extract from message of, i. 80; ii. 132; iii. 118; remarks on annual message of, iii. 94; on female teachers, ii. 168.
 Shannon, Gov., message of, ii. 131.
 Sharon, schools in, i. 190.
 Sherman, schools in, i. 190.
 Short, Rev. D., Commissioner, ii. 5; article by, i. 73.
 Signs in schools, i. 38.
 Sigourney, Mrs. L. H., on female patriotism, i. 62; on the cultivation of the sense of the beautiful, ii. 117; on improvement in district schools, ii. 22.
 Silvio Pellico, noble sentiment of, ii. 17.
 Simpson, Mr., on defects of popular education in England, ii. 273.
 Simsbury, schools in, i. 179, 189.
 Simultaneous instruction, ii. 208.
 Skin, structure, uses and abuses of, ii. 106, 123.
 Slates, how secured, i. 69; iv. 50; uses of, ii. 78, 93, 182-3; exercises on, iv. 69, 124.
 Small children, appropriate methods of governing and teaching, ii. 38, 182; length of school session for, iii. 116, 120, 128.
 Smith, Dr. J. V. C., on seats and desks, i. 23; iii. 118.
 Smith, Alfred, Report of Committee on Education by, iii. 221.
 Snow plough, iii. 15.
 Songs for children, i. 29; iv. 62.
 Southbury, schools in, i. 190; iii. 189.
 South Carolina, school system of, ii. 156; iii. 171.
 Southington, schools in, 189; iii. 204.
 Specimen, striking effect of, ii. 127.
 Spelling, defects in teaching, ii. 75, 109, 160, 164; iii. 34; method of teaching in Borough Road school, i. 100; in schools of Prussia, i. 134; in model school, Dublin, iv. 32; recommended by Mr. Dunn, ii. 16; by Mr. Mann, ii. 109; by Mr. Thayer, iii. 43; by writing, iii. 42, 88; by slate and black board, iv. 33, 80.
 Spelling books, titles of, i. 121; ii. 224.
 Spencer, J. C., Report by, ii. 170; iii. 94, 118.
 Spiritual influence in schools, ii. 47, 78, 143.
 Stamford, schools in, i. 73, 190.
 Stafford, schools in, i. 181, 189.
 Sterling, schools in, i. 189; ii. 223.
 Stintz, M. report on normal school at Potsdam, i. 129.
 Story, Judge, remarks of at Washington, i. 148.
 Stonington, schools in, i. 185; 189.
 Stowber, anecdote of relative to the schools of Ban de la Roche, ii. 132.
 Stowe, Prof. report on schools of Prussia, i. 134; on teachers' seminaries, ii. 61, 72, 87, 103; tribute to ii. 35, 65.
 Stratfield, schools in, i. 187, 190.
 Stratford, schools in, i. 190.
 Studies in common schools, too numerous, i. 163; ii. 160, 207; iii. 250.
 Suffield, schools in, i. 189; ii. 206.

- Summer schools, i. 166; ii. 85, 158, 167, 180, 206.
- Superintendent, State, (*see New York, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri*) County, (*see New York*) City, (*see Providence, Lancaster, Buffalo*)
- Supplication by the English language, ii. 12, 33.
- Supplementary education, ii. 261.
- Support of schools, different modes of, ii. 213; in Connecticut, i. 160; ii. 212
- Sweden, education in, ii. 332; iv. 28.
- Swing, circular, for schools, iii. 15.
- Switzerland, school systems of, ii. 319; vocal music in, 51.
- Synthetical method of teaching, ii. 262.
- Tact for teaching, ii. 145.
- Talcott, Henry, report by, iii. 216.
- Talent, peculiar, to be ascertained, ii. 48
- Tax, how and on what laid, iii. 220, 8, 38.
- Taxation, for school purposes, iii. 163; iv. 11; by quarter or rate bills, i. 162; iv. 5, 9.
- Taylor, J. Orville, remarks at Washington, i. 111; on the Prussian system, i. 111; on the abandonment by leading men of public schools, i. 111; on the influence of a school fund, i. 111; on qualified teachers, i. 111; on the want of school supervision, i. 112; district school by, noticed, iii. 48; Common School Almanac by, iv. 29; Common School Assistant by, iv. 30.
- Teach one thing at a time, i. 53.
- Teaching, principles of, i. 93, 128; ii. 174; innovations, ii. 33.
- Teacher and pupil, ii. 137; and parent, 138; iv. 139; true dignity of, iii. 101; ii. 89, 129; moral character of, iii. 22; *sketch of faithful and unfaithful*, iv. 138; questions for, to himself, iv. 124; moral and intellectual character of, ii. 47.
- Teachers, law respecting, iii. 219, 8, 29. books for, recommended, iii. 48; iv. 29; frequent change of, i. 167; ii. 162, 206; iv. 134; education of, i. 21, 69; ii. 19, 52, 172, 193; iii. 161, 166, 249; iv. 272; examination of, i. 159; ii. 67, 114, 158; iii. 19, 20, 21, 249; first day in school, iii. 22, 38; associations of, i. 48, 53, 124; ii. 43, 70; iii. 38, 249; removal of incompetent, iii. 89; qualifications of, ii. 119, 121, 168; iii. 18, 99, 149, 219, 249; female, i. 9, 17, 34, 49, 104, 105, 167; ii. 15, 53, 61, 119, 155, 168, 203; iii. 148; labors of, i. 37, 109; duty of to schoolhouses, ii. 43; before and out of school, iv. 30; compensation of, i. 112, 168; ii. 206; health of, ii. 46.
- Teacher's department, i. 175; (*see New York*) seminary, (*see normal school*) manual, (*see Palmer, Dunn*) taught, (*see Davis*)
- Temperature of school rooms, iii. 59, 113; (*see Schoolhouses*)
- Templenoyle, Ireland, agricultural school at, ii. 260.
- Tennessee, school system of, ii. 19.
- Text books, names of in the different studies used in Conn. i. 121; ii. 224. (*see school books*)
- Thayer, G. F. lecture on spelling and defining, iii. 42; on courtesy, iii. 57.
- Theory of teaching, notice of, iv. 29; extracts from, 49, 56, 57.
- Things, lessons about, i. 134; ii. 256; iv. 32.
- Thompson, school in, i. 183, 189.
- Thompson, D. P. letter from, iii. 18.
- Thought, exercise, ii. 306.
- Tolland, schools in, i. 180, 189; ii. 166, 239; iii. 201.
- Tolland county, convention of, i. 45; ii. 49.
- Torrington, schools in, i. 190.
- Torrington, schools in, i. 190.
- Town deposit fund, origin of, i. 3, 161.
- Tract society, school library, ii. 198; iii. 123.
- Trade school, ii. 298, 309, 214.
- Trivial schools in Sweden, iv. 28.
- Trumbull, schools in, i. 180; iii. 194.
- Truth, ii. 146.
- Try, ii. 145; iv. 63.
- Tuckfield, Mrs. education of the people by, notice of, ii. 96; extract from on oral instruction, ii. 96, 113; iv. 33, 34, 57.
- Tuscany, school system of, ii. 318.
- Uneducated children in N. York, ii. 172; in factory villages, iii. 230.
- Uniformity of school books, ii. 172, 176. (*see school books*)
- Union, schools in, i. 181, 189.
- Union district system, i. 117, 163; ii. 36, 152, 210, 217; iii. 85, 92, 146; law respecting, iii. 219.
- Union of intellect and labor, ii. 178; iv. 160.
- United States, common school education in, ii. 192; iii. 129; iv. 133; constitution of, should be studied in schools, i. 93.
- Utterance, power of to be cultivated, ii. 41.
- Vacations, ii. 123.
- Vaccination, iii. 95.
- Venetian states, school system of ii. 317.
- Ventilation, iii. 60, 111. (*see school-houses*)
- Vermont, schools in, ii. 153.
- Vernon, schools in, i. 181, 189; ii. 240.
- Versailles, normal school at, ii. 334.
- Vienna, Polytechnic institute at, ii. 314.
- Villemain M., on the education of children in factories, iv. 152.
- Virginia, number of persons unable to read or write in, i. 80; state of education in, ii. 131; iv. 25; proposed school system for, iv. 26.
- Visible illustrations in teaching, ii. 127.
- Visitation of schools by parents, iii. 37; the soul of a school system, i. 80.
- Visitors, school, duties of, i. 158; ii. 69, 210; iii. 19, 37; law respecting, iii. 218, S. 8, 239; sub committee of, iv. 182; compensation of, iii. 239; instances of shameful neglect by, i. 71.
- Vocal music, (*see Music*)
- Voluntown, schools in, i. 83, 189.
- Vote, who may in school meeting, iii. 206, 217, S. 214.
- Wadsworth, Gen. James, author of the school library system, iii. 119.
- Wages of school teachers, (*see teachers*)
- Waldenses, education among, i. 112.
- Waldo, L. P. member of the Board, ii. 5; school meetings by in Tolland county, ii. 49.
- Wales, state of education in, ii. 227.
- Wallace, Gov. message of, ii. 192.
- Wallingford, schools in, i. 190, 194.
- Wapping, schools in, i. 178.
- War and education, ii. 191.
- Warren, Dr. quoted, iii. 115.
- Warren, schools in, i. 190.
- Washington, schools in, i. 190; ii. 147.
- Washington District, Hartford, plan of school house in, iv. 195.
- Waterbury, schools in, i. 186, 190; iii. 204.
- Waterston, R. C. extracts from lecture by, ii. 47, 78.
- Watertown, schools in, i. 190; iii. 188.
- Wayland, president, extract from, ii. 13.
- Webster, Noah, tribute to, ii. 103; manual of useful studies by, iv. 67.
- Weissenfels, teachers' seminary at, ii. 296, 301.
- Wesleyan University, normal department in, iv. 179, 194.
- Westbrook, schools in, iii. 50, 201.
- West Hartford, schools in, i. 176, 189; iii. 213.
- West Haven, schools in, i. 190.
- Westminster, schools in, i. 189.
- Weston, schools in, i. 190.
- Wethersfield, schools in, i. 179, 189; ii. 141, 147, 221.
- Westville, schools in, i. 186.
- Wilderspin, ii. 267.
- Wilhelm's method of teaching music, i. 15; ii. 10.
- Willard, Mrs. Emma, plan by for improving common schools in Kensington, ii. 143; address by, ii. 242; results of her efforts, iii. 29, 30; plan by, of female associations, iii. 54; on the relations of females, and mothers especially, to education, iv. 61.
- Willimantic, schools in, i. 183, 189.
- Willington, schools in, i. 181, 183; ii. 220.
- Wilton, schools in, i. 190; ii. 221.
- Winchester, schools in, i. 188, 190.
- Windham, schools in, i. 189.
- Windham, County Convention in, i. 24; ii. 66, 68.
- Windows, (*see schoolhouse*)
- Windsor, schools in, i. 178, 189; iii. 208; new school in, iii. 105.
- Winsted, schools in i. 189, 190; ii. 214.
- Winter schools, i. 166; how to improve, ii. 37, 53, 69, 85; iii. 81, 88.
- Wirttemberg, school system of, ii. 325; course of instruction of, i. 134.
- Wisdom and knowledge contrasted, ii. 189.
- Wittich, W. on teachers' seminaries of Prussia, i. 125.
- Wolcott, schools in, i. 190.
- Wolcottville, iii. 185.
- Women, value of books to, ii. 191.
- Wood, John, improvements introduced by, into sessional school, ii. 251.
- Wood, Rev. S. on the Lancasterian school at New Haven, ii. 116.
- Wood, (*see fuel*)
- Woodward, Dr. S. E. letter to Mr. Mann, i. 46; on length of school session, iii. 120; on schools of Worcester, iv. 65; on insanity and education, 171.
- Woodbridge, Gov. message of, iii. 170.
- Woodbridge, schools in, i. 190; ii. 230.
- Woodbridge, W. C., ii. 321, 323; iii. 100; iv. 29.
- Woodbury, schools in, i. 190; iii. 78, 186.
- Woodstock, schools in, i. 183, 189; iii. 188, 189.
- Woodstock, Vt. school system of, iv. 18.
- Worcester, Mass. common schools in, iv. 66.
- Words often mis-pronounced, list of, ii. 77, 92, 111, 126.
- Working men of England, address of on national education, ii. 117; of France, music taught, i. 45.
- Worthington, ii. 147; iii. 190.
- Wright, T. L. ii. 52.
- Writing, on slate, ii. 93; iv. 79. (*see penmanship*)
- Wyse, Thomas, on the education of teachers, and teachers' libraries, i. 52; on education in England, ii. 274; on the school system of Prussia, 304; on public schools of Bonn, ii. 306.
- Yards to schoolhouses, i. 146; iii. 168.
- Young children, management of, ii. 182; methods of instruction adapted to, ii. 189; confinement of in school, iii. 190, 128.
- Young men's Institute, Hartford, ii. 81.
- Zeller, Mr. pupil of Fellenberg at Beuggen, ii. 324.

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